

**Women's criminal re-offending: Contributing and
Protective Factors**

A Thesis

Submitted in Fulfilment

of the Requirements for the Degree

of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

Annabel Mary Taylor

University of Canterbury 2004

6049
T238
2004

Acknowledgements

This research would not have been possible without the willing involvement of the primary participants who shared their lives with me and for whom the process of recollection was at times painful. Their accounts were supplemented by input from experienced criminal justice practitioners and social service agency personnel who contributed their ideas and in so doing, demonstrated their abiding interest in the welfare of their clients.

Encouragement to undertake doctoral studies originated from Dr Dugald McDonald, then Head of the Department of Social Work, University of Canterbury, who offered his unstinting support up until his retirement in 2000. Dr Kate Van Heugten of the Department of Social Work then assumed the role of primary supervisor and her unfailing interest, accessibility and enthusiasm has been instrumental in sustaining my progress. The quality of her insight has been much valued and appreciated.

Assistant supervision has been provided by Dr Randolph Grace of the Department of Psychology, University of Canterbury. Randy has also been available throughout the progress of the research for ongoing support and critical oversight of the quantitative component.

My daughter Mairin Taylor was particularly helpful with statistical input and advice as was her friend James Anderson. Both were students in the Psychology Department at the time.

Fellow staff and PhD students in the Department of Social Work have been unfailingly supportive and enthusiastic and have taken the time to listen, to comment and to make suggestions. Special mention should go to Heads of the Department, Dr Marie Connolly and Jim Anglem who have eased the way when possible and shared the significant fluctuations in progress.

Thanks also to Ainslie Oberg and Emma Vessey who have assisted me with the vagaries of computer formatting in the last stages of the writing and have offered helpful suggestions.

My family, whanau and friends have travelled the road with me. Sometimes I think it would have appeared that the project was nearly completed for quite some time. Their support, interest and encouragement ensured my being able to continue this undertaking.

Finally, I acknowledge and thank my deceased partner Neville Taylor for his past encouragement and support.

Table of Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>I</i>
<i>Table of Contents</i>	<i>III</i>
<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>VI</i>
<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>VI</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	<i>VIII</i>
PART ONE THE ORIGINS OF THE RESEARCH	1
INTRODUCTION TO PART ONE.....	1
CHAPTER ONE	2
INTRODUCTION	2
1.1 The origins of the research topic.....	2
1.2 Aims and outcomes	5
1.3 Overview of the research project.....	8
CHAPTER TWO	10
THE CONTEXT	10
2.1 Introduction.....	10
2.2 The history of women's imprisonment in Aotearoa/New Zealand	12
2.3 The characteristics of women in prison.....	17
2.4 The legacy of New Zealand's criminal justice sentencing policies	25
2.5 Contemporary sentencing policies in New Zealand	28
2.6 The community's response to released women offenders in New Zealand	29
CONCLUSION TO PART ONE	43
PART TWO: THEORIES OF CRIME AND RECIDIVISM	45
INTRODUCTION TO PART TWO.....	45
CHAPTER THREE	47
THE SEMANTICS OF CRIME	47
CHAPTER FOUR	53
WOMEN AND CRIME: WOMEN AND RE-OFFENDING.....	53
4.1 Women and theories about crime.....	53
4.2 Theories of Re-offending	59
4.3 Theories of crime causation	61
4.4 Factors associated with re-offending from research	68
CONCLUSION TO PART TWO	95

PART THREE: METHODOLOGICAL THEORY AND PROCESS.....	97
INTRODUCTION TO PART THREE	97
CHAPTER FIVE	99
OVERVIEW OF THEORETICAL APPROACH	99
5.1 Feminism.....	100
5.2 Feminist Social Science.....	105
5.3 Summary of the feminist perspective	121
CHAPTER SIX.....	123
METHODOLOGY AND THE RESEARCH PROCESS	123
6.1 Placing the Researcher in the Research	123
6.2 Multi-method Research: Combining Stories and Numbers	133
6.3 Research Design	136
6.3.4 <i>Secondary data</i>	143
6.3.5 <i>Interviews with informed experts</i>	144
6.3.6 <i>Interview process and secondary data collection</i>	144
6.5 Cross cultural issues	151
6.6 Consultation with other social service organisations	155
6.7 Ethical considerations.....	158
6.8 Conclusion	162
CHAPTER SEVEN	163
DATA ANALYSIS.....	163
CONCLUSION TO PART THREE	169
PART FOUR THE FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	171
INTRODUCTION TO PART FOUR	171
CHAPTER EIGHT	172
THE QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS	172
8.1 Introduction.....	172
8.2 Demographic Data	173
8.3 Conclusion to demographic data	184
8.4 Official Status and Re-offending	185
8.4.2 <i>Self-report re-offending</i>	187
8.5 Correlational and Discriminant analyses.....	193
8.6 Descriptive Data	198
8.7 Factors Immediately Associated with the Last Offence.....	228

8.8 Summary of Findings from Quantitative Data.....	230
CHAPTER NINE.....	234
QUALITATIVE FINDINGS	234
9.1 Introduction.....	234
9.2 Contributors to re-offending in the life history	234
9.3 Protective factors in the life histories	243
9.4 The Community Probation Files	249
9.5 Factors from the Probation files associated with re-offending	250
9.6 Interviews with Informed Experts.....	254
9.7 Informed experts' comments on contributors to re-offending.....	255
9.8 Informed experts comments on factors associated with protection from re-offending	264
9.9 Final feedback from the participants	269
CHAPTER TEN	270
INTEGRATED DATA SUMMARY.....	270
10.1 Risk/ and Criminogenic Needs analysis	274
10.2 The Social Domain	276
10.3 The Economic Domain	279
10.4 Mental Health Domain	280
10.5 Victimisation.....	282
10.6 Significant Interconnecting Themes	283
10.6.1 Violence	283
10.6.2 Poverty.....	284
10.6.3 Lack of Choice	284
10.6.4 Addressing Re-offending as a Developmental Process	286
10.6.5 The Role of Gender	286
10.6.6 Cultural Matters	287
CHAPTER ELEVEN.....	288
WIDER THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS AND DISCUSSION	288
11.1 Towards integration of deviance and life course theories	297
11.2 Policy Implications.....	300
11.3 Limitations of the Study	308
11.4 Suggestions for Further Research	308
CONCLUSION TO PART FOUR.....	311
<i>References.....</i>	<i>314</i>
<i>Appendices</i>	<i>343</i>

List of Tables

Table 2.1: Age of Women Inmates	20
Table 5.1: Typology of broad, feminist political stances.....	102
Table 8.1: Most serious offence type leading to most recent imprisonment	183
Table 8.2: Risk Needs Assessment: Non-offenders.....	189
Table 8.3: Risk/Needs Assessment: Re-offenders	190
Table 8.4: Analysis of variance and risk (ANOVA).....	191
Table 8.5: Analysis of variance and needs (ANOVA)	192
Table 8.6: Correlation of 47 variables with re-offending	194
Table 8.7: The two statistically significant variables from the correlation of 47	195
Table 8.8 Discriminant Analysis Summary	196
Table 8.9 Classification Table	196
Table 8.10: Tribal Affiliations of participants	200
Table 8.11: Childhood Victimisation.....	204
Table 8.12: Social services ranked according to importance by the participants	211
Table 8.13: Participants views on improvements to social services (ranked highest to lowest)	215
Table 8.14: Substance abuse chi-square	217
Table 8.15: Self-Report Contributors	220
Table 8.16 Protectors from Offending	222
Table 9.1: Contributors to Re-offending.....	255
Table 9.2: Informed Experts: Protectors from Re-offending.....	264

List of Figures

Figure 4.1: Discourse analysis of terms applied in relation to released women offenders.....	92
Figure 5.1: Diagram of epistemology and methodology chosen for this study.	99
Figure 7.1: Flowchart of Data Collection and analysis process.....	165
Figure 8.1: Age of Participants	173
Figure 8.2: Secondary schooling.....	174
Figure 8.3: Main sources of income	176
Figure 8.4: Age distribution of dependant children	181
Figure 8.5: Areas of residence	181
Figure 8.6: Involvement with whanau, hapu and iwi.....	201

Figure 8.7: Other Maori cultural factors	201
Figure 8.8: Quality of prison experience (negative)	205
Figure 8.9: Types of in-prison programme participation.....	208
Figure 8.10: Costs on release from the Steps to Freedom Grant	216
Figure 8.11: Immediate contributors to offending prior to last offence	229
Figure 10.1: Meta Factorial-Analysis	271
Figure 11.1 Toward an integration of deviance and life course theories.....	299

Abstract

This exploratory study concerns the possible relationship between an array of endogenous and exogenous factors that may be associated with women's criminal recidivism in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

A mixed methodological approach was employed involving both quantitative and qualitative methods. Primary data were derived from semi-structured interviews with 26 women who had been released from Christchurch Women's Prison over a period of up to seven years prior to 1999.

Primary data from the 26 participants were triangulated with interviews with a group of expert informants and with secondary data involving document analysis of the participants' Community Probation records.

Correlational and discriminant analyses were conducted with a proportion of the quantitative data. The remaining quantitative data were subjected to descriptive statistical analysis. Qualitative data were analysed thematically according to, but not limited by, the categories already emerging from the primary data.

The findings suggest that an array of factors in the social domain plays a significant role in both women's criminal recidivism and in desistance from crime. Factors in the social domain such as criminal association and intimate relationships with current offenders appeared to present as risk factors for women. Desistance from offending was linked to supportive pro-social relationships and consistent social support.

Economic factors, victimisation and substance abuse were also indicated as impacting on women's recidivism.

The retrospective data yielded a stronger emphasis on the notion of re-offending across the life course in terms of life-course transitions. This life course perspective emerged as having significant utility in terms of understanding the aetiology of women's recidivism and desistance from offending.

The findings suggest that both endogenous and exogenous factors need to be considered in relation to women's re-offending and that ignoring the impact of wider socio-structural factors such as poverty and gender tends to create a narrow perception of women's criminal behaviour.

PART ONE THE ORIGINS OF THE RESEARCH

Introduction to Part One

Part One explains the genesis of this project and the reasons for selecting this area of research. It explores how the social work practice context of working with women offenders in the New Zealand prison system informed my approach to the research. The overview and plan of the thesis is outlined in this part also.

The historical background to the way women offenders are treated in the criminal justice system in Aotearoa/New Zealand is traversed. Significant trends and developments in the treatment of women offenders are discussed. This historical background is followed by a descriptive account of the characteristics of women offenders as portrayed in official records and the types of offences they were likely to be sentenced for. The official information about women offenders is then linked to a brief consideration of New Zealand's criminal justice sentencing policies.

Part One finishes with a discussion of the community environment that women offenders are released into, and pays particular attention to the social services that are available after release. The potential role of stigma in the lives of released women and how this may impact on re-offending are raised at this point.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 The origins of the research topic

This thesis is a product of social work praxis. It is grounded in my past and current social work experience. Throughout the years of research and writing, I have been involved with women and their families/whanau who are trying to reintegrate back into the community after serving prison sentences. Since leaving employment with the New Zealand Prison Service in 1998, my professional social work role has become one of general support and advocacy. Some women resumed contact with me through the doctoral research fieldwork and this led to a new range of support work that involved mainly practical assistance of women and their families/whanau.

When the question of taking up a large piece of work such as a doctoral thesis is discussed by friends and colleagues, the generally held view is that a person requires an abiding interest and passion in a subject in order to sustain the arduous work involved. This study was motivated by concern for the situation of women prisoners in Aotearoa/New Zealand. That interest was closely tied to a lifelong concern for children and their wellbeing, beginning with a teaching career and followed by a shift into social work, based on a developing interest in children's welfare that recognised the importance of their families/whanau.

Shortly after beginning employment at Christchurch Women's Prison in 1989, it became apparent to me that there was little, or no, information about why women offended and re-offended (Carlen & Worall, 1987; Padel & Stevenson, 1986). There was also little information available about the effects of imprisonment on the children and families of women "inside". The then Department of Justice¹ provided a limited range of programmes in New Zealand women's prisons aimed at addressing re-offending. These appeared to be based on overseas research about male offending, although there were no specific policy documents that offered justification for what was offered at the time. Programmes were limited to general personal growth courses, such as assertiveness training, secondary schooling, and arts and crafts. These were mainly under the umbrella of

¹ The Department of Justice was restructured into the Department of Corrections and Ministry of Justice in 1994.

education services and changed little from year to year. The part that social work was to take in either addressing re-offending or meeting inmate generic needs was unclear at the time of my appointment. Some ideas about a prospective social work role were expressed in the 1981 Penal Policy Review report and this suggested a generic support role for inmates (Department of Justice, 1981).

I began my social work practice in Christchurch Women's prison without a specific job description and with little institutional knowledge about what the social worker would do. During the first two years of employment, I concentrated on building a practice that was based on the expressed demands of the women in prison at the time and of their families/whanau. In this sense, early social work at Christchurch Women's Prison was client-centred and client-driven. My prison social work developed two main purposes based on my experience. The first was to contribute to the "humane" part of what was then called "humane containment" (Department of Justice, Prisons in Change Report, 1990, p.21)². The second was to support women individually with their progress in addressing the reasons for their re-offending (Prisons in Change Report, 1990, p.21). The first role involved primarily practical assistance, crisis counselling, and advice. The second role involved more brokerage, ongoing support, and motivational counselling.

Throughout the early years of practice in the prison, I continued to feel frustrated about the lack of writing and research about women's offending and re-offending in New Zealand. Along with other professionals working in women's prisons at the time, I sat on committees that planned programmes to address re-offending and helped to make decisions about individual women and their parole programmes. These decisions were based partly on the accepted wisdom of what had gone before and seemed to have worked, and on the beginnings of Departmental policies about what might work based on overseas research in this area at the time.

Frustrated with the lack of knowledge, coupled with the urge to extend my social work professional and academic training, I embarked on a Master of Social Work degree through Massey University in 1993. As a part of the academic programme, I chose a Special Topic course that enabled students to conduct original research in an area of their choosing. It seemed appropriate at the time to focus on

² From the earlier Department of Justice days the Department of Corrections continues to apply the twin notions of 'humane containment' and 'addressing re-offending' as two main purposes of its core business.

issues arising from my practice and to explore the situation that women were faced with in prison. I chose to focus on the effects of imprisonment on mothers “inside”. This was partly due to the intense distress that mothers experienced with the separation from their children. It was also due to my increasing knowledge of the difficulties that families and children encountered while their mother or family member served a prison sentence. The literature review and survey of existing research about women’s offending in New Zealand yielded little. There was a growing body of interesting work from the United Kingdom (Carlen, 1985; 1990; Carlen & Worrall, 1987; Dobash, Dobash & Gutteridge, 1986; Gelsthorpe & Morris, 1990) and from the United States (Chesney-Lind, 1986; Jurik, 1983; Simon, 1975; Sims, 1992) about women’s imprisonment. There was minimal research about women’s re-offending and the difficulties they might encounter on their return to society.

One of the most obvious features immediately apparent to those who work in women’s prisons in Aotearoa/New Zealand is the high proportion of Maori women in prison. This was recorded at 42% of the women’s sentenced population in prison in the 1997 prison census (Ministry of Justice, New Zealand, 1997), and at 59% in the 1999 Prison Census (Department of Corrections, 2000a). Although overseas research may offer some promising theories about ethnicity and crime, it cannot be relied upon to answer the unique questions that this disparity continues to raise in terms of our own culture and society. The fact that Maori women make up such a high proportion of the female prison population in Aotearoa/New Zealand begs the question of the role of ethnicity and culture in terms of criminal offending by Maori women.

The Master’s thesis that I eventually completed in 1996, was an historical account of women’s imprisonment in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This topic was chosen because I felt that in order to understand the nature of current systems of punishment and rehabilitation of women in New Zealand, I needed to look to the past to study their origins. The thesis was a penological study of the development of women’s prisons in New Zealand in the context of the changing socio-political environment, which influenced prison developments. Some specific populations of women offenders such as “mothers inside” and Maori women were considered. The aftermath of imprisonment and return of women to the community was not traversed and remained an outstanding area for research.

Throughout the progress of my Master's research in the mid 1990s, women challenged the then Department of Justice and the later Department of Corrections about how it met the needs of women inmates while incarcerated and how it would meet their rehabilitative needs when very little research existed to assist decision-making. The 1989, *Ministerial Review of Prisons (Te Ara Hou)*³ (Department of Justice), provided a springboard for these concerns and referred to the dearth of material about women's prisons in New Zealand. The most recent report, *He Kete Pokai*⁴, commissioned by the Department of Corrections in May 2000 reiterates similar concerns (Lashlie & Pivac, 2000). It details some of the longstanding attempts of various women's and penal reform organisations to promote a focus on women's needs without assuming that they were identical to male offenders'. *He Kete Pokai* is the most recent contribution to a lengthy trail of documents urging policy-makers to support the development of policy on women's imprisonment and rehabilitation (Dunstall 2000; O'Neill, 1989; Saphira, 1981)

This doctoral thesis builds on the research undertaken at Master's level and serves two knowledge-building purposes. It seeks to extend our knowledge about how New Zealand women cope with reintegration on release from prison and to explore the factors that influence women to "go straight" or conversely, to re-offend. In this sense, it builds on the knowledge gained from the historical study and brings my own research into the present. It is also a part of a continuum of a small but growing body of research for and about women who criminally offend in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Given the paucity of research in this field, it plays a role in knowledge and theory construction in the research context.

1.2 Aims and outcomes

It is hoped that there may be a number of possible outcomes from the completion of this thesis. The research into the factors that may assist women to "go straight" once they have been released may be helpful to penal-policy makers who are currently grappling with addressing re-offending. I am not aware of any other study where a group of women ex-inmates has been asked for their opinion. Taking a feminist stance, this researcher has approached women as experts in their own re-offending. They have had the opportunity to make some sense of the range of factors that have been

³ This subtitle in Maori translates as "The New Way".

⁴ The title of this report translates as "Suitcase of Hope".

traditionally associated with their re-offending and have had the opportunity to reflect on what has worked. The research has also taken the epistemological approach of considering the released women as women first and offenders second. It is a feminist, emancipatory piece of research in this sense. The participants' voices are threaded throughout the reporting of the research.

Research which has dealt with the role of community organisations in the reintegration of released women, has taken a consumer response approach to these services. The participants have had the opportunity to comment and reflect on the relative value of social services available to them in the community. The information from the women may be of interest to those organisations both collectively and individually in the planning and implementation of support services for women. The organisations that participated in the study at the outset have expressed a keen anticipation for the results.

Those findings in the research that have detailed the economic circumstances of released women and some of the difficulties they faced on release from a penal institution have implications for income support policy and the kinds of programmes put in place for released women. Whilst economic factors were not necessarily perceived to be connected to re-offending in the minds of many of the women who participated in this study, there was no doubt that for those with children, financial needs were a priority immediately after release.

The doctoral thesis as a whole will become part of the work in progress of a publication about women's experience of imprisonment in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This publication will be based on the historical work completed some time ago coupled with a new section entitled "aftermath" that details the experience of release back into the community.

Active, feminist, praxis underpins this study and this has led to some interventions and outcomes emerging during its course. An example of this is in my involvement with the recent threat of the closure of the kitchen at Christchurch Women's Prison during the early part of 2001. As part of an established group of women who remain involved with Christchurch women's prison I presented a submission to the then Minister of Corrections (Hon. Mat Robson) on behalf of a group of inmates and ex-inmates. The other women with whom I consulted over this issue as it unfolded, and who

share a concern for women inmates' wellbeing, included the two *kuia*⁵ associated with the prison, Mrs Kaa Daniels and Mrs Kiwa Hutchens. The group also involved some staff employed at the prison, Kathy Dunstall of the Howard League for Penal Reform, and various other agency personnel who work with released women. As a result of the combined submissions from this group, the Minister revoked the decision of the Public Prisons' managers and the women's kitchen has been maintained.

The issues surrounding the proposed kitchen closure raised much that is pertinent to this study. There was the issue of access of women to employment and training opportunities that could result in NZQA⁶ certification in Food Hygiene. There was the threat of loss of employment to a significant group of women (there were six women rostered in the kitchen at any one time), and the kitchen constituted a significant part of the overall industry available in the prison. There was the loss of basic training in menu and food preparation and learning in nutrition and health. Learning to cook for large numbers is a skill much valued on *marae*⁷ and necessary for the hotel and hospital industries.

Debate was also generated around the gendered nature of employment in New Zealand women's prisons where employment has followed traditional domestic ideals. Whilst kitchen work was seen as gendered from this perspective, it was also seen as providing valuable, practical skill acquisition, relevant to women inmates' lives. There was a suggestion made by prison managers at the time, that new areas of industry and training would replace the kitchen employment. However, inmates viewed such assurances with distrust, owing to fact that there were no definite replacement options made available to them.

The fact that the kitchen re-organisation had occurred after Christchurch prisons had been restructured into a regional model of management begged the question of the effects of regionalisation. The new regional structure of Christchurch prisons had meant the loss of autonomy for the women's prison, which means that major decisions could be made elsewhere and be driven by other imperatives. There appeared to be a risk that decisions about the continuation of

⁵ A *kuia* is a respected female elder in Maori society.

⁶ The New Zealand Qualifications Authority regulates nationally recognised training qualifications.

⁷ *Marae* are meeting places for the Maori community.

programmes and services were likely to be driven by the needs of the much larger male institutions given their dominant size and population. Regionalising kitchen services was argued for on the basis of cost and efficiency with little regard to the likely effect on opportunities for women.

As a result of the continued pressure, the kitchen remained open and the new Minister became more aware of the wider concerns about decision-making hierarchies and the place of women's prisons within those (see Appendix 1). The policy and operational environment in regard to women in prison in New Zealand clearly left a door open for such changes to be implemented with little reference to their long-term effect on incarcerated women.

The above account offers an example of the way that this research was conceived to be both feminist and emancipatory and therefore requiring the researcher to be willing to address issues of ongoing concern to the research participants. It also demonstrates the way that women can network and organise in response to actions that are taken by decision makers, in this instance, the Department of Corrections, Public Prisons Service. Similar networking has continued throughout the research for this project. It has meant that there has been, and continues to be, a group of women intrinsically interested in the welfare of women prisoners and of released women, who share knowledge about policy developments. That shared knowledge sometimes leads to collective action that in turn has the potential to impact on prison administrators. The issues raised by this example relate to how to address women's re-offending and the link between prison programmes and preparation for release. Both issues constitute part of the main purpose of this thesis. It is hoped that current policy development will be influenced by the extension to our knowledge and understanding of what helps women to "go straight". This knowledge is potentially enhanced not only by way of individual research effort but also by the collective efforts of people interested in the welfare of prisoners.

1.3 Overview of the research project

This study is divided into four main parts. The first part deals with the criminal justice context and describes the approach that New Zealand takes towards women who criminally offend. It details specifically what is known about women offenders in New Zealand from official data and relevant facts pertaining to their sentencing and management. It goes on in Part Two, to discuss the broad internationally-generated theories about crime and women's crime and makes conjectures about how these have influenced the treatment of women in New Zealand. Theories about recidivism and what

constitutes re-offending will be traversed also, so that the research topic is placed in its specific theoretical context. Pertinent research literature such as exists will be reviewed following the review of theory.

Part Three will introduce the research project itself and the ideas that informed the methodology. It will place the research in the wider context of ethical and practical considerations raised by the process of exploring social issues through social science research. Specific issues in relation to cross-cultural research are traversed in terms of ethical concerns. The individual values of the researcher and how these have been developed and refined by the research process will be discussed. The impact of social work praxis and the inherent ethical principles that social work entails will be raised in terms of how these intersect with social science research principles. Likewise, social work theory and knowledge will be considered in terms of how they fit within broader social science epistemology. Part Three will conclude with the research design and how this met the theoretical conditions prescribed by my standpoint.

Part Four is devoted to the findings of the study and the implications of these for current debates and ideas about recidivism. It will report the results of both quantitative and qualitative analyses and compare and contrast what the different methodologies have contributed to this exploration of women's re-offending in New Zealand. This section will relate what the participants had to say about the research as experts in their own right about their own re-offending. Throughout the fieldwork, informed experts who work with released women were consulted also. Their views and thoughts have contributed to an overall perspective of what helps women to "go straight". Suggestions for the possible direction of future research in this area will complete this study.

Before embarking on the description of the research that is the substance of this thesis, relevant details and facts about the group to be studied may assist the reader to understand some of what is already known. The next chapters take a snapshot view of the past in relation to women's offending and women offenders. They relate the past to the present and link some of the major theories about women's offending to criminal justice systems in order to see the ways that attitudes and policies helped to shape New Zealand's current approaches. The significant outstanding debates in the criminal justice area in regard to the treatment of women will be raised so that the reader can place this research in the contemporary criminal justice environment.

Chapter Two

The Context

2.1 Introduction

Towards the end of most of the weeks in the year, women are released from the three women's prisons in Aotearoa/New Zealand that are situated in three geographically distant locations (the metropolitan areas of Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch). In the period, 1 March 1998 and 28 February 1999 there were 326 releases from women's prisons. There were 94 from Christchurch, the area of focus for this study (Department of Corrections, 2000a).

These release data translate into individual women making their way back into a society from which they have been separated, in some cases, for many years. There were many occasions, during my social work practice in prison, when women would request assistance with practical release arrangements. Upon leaving the prison, women usually left with little more in personal effects than filled a couple of rubbish bags. Rarely did they have suitcases to contain their property. They left with their clothes and often a few treasured items that had been carefully watched over and looked after while they had been "inside". Often these items included photographs of family and friends that provided a constant reminder of their lives before imprisonment. Christchurch Women's Prison was unable to store furniture or other large items and frequently such items that had been left with family and friends had long since been sold, distributed or traded in order to help defray the costs of imprisonment.

Women were met at the prison gates by friends or family where they had local support. Sometimes they had no outside relationships left to speak of, particularly after long periods of imprisonment, and they relied on prison staff to transport them to the nearest city. In other cases, they were taken to intercity transport terminals with whatever monies in their prison accounts. This usually remained a few dollars only.

From this point of departure from an institution, women began a process of re-establishment in the community, a process about which we know very little. We know some things from the official data that are available. Other facts we may assume from our knowledge of fundamental human needs.

The facts themselves and the knowledge of physical needs are not able to represent the thoughts, feelings and lived experience of women. They can, however, convey some important descriptive details about this particular group in the criminal justice system.

The demographic data available about women in New Zealand prisons show that many of those who are released may eventually return to prison. The 1999 Prison Census indicated that 75% of women in prison at the time of the census had had a prior conviction (Department of Corrections, 2000a, p.21). One of the assumptions that can be made about this rate of re-imprisonment is that some women will have had to reconstruct their lives on more than one occasion with a potential accumulative loss of assets in the community.

Many of those who are released will need to reconstruct relationships with their children and families since census data also show that a significant number will resume care of dependant children (Department of Corrections, 2000, p.37). Based on recent New Zealand demographic research, a significant number is likely to be influenced by drug use/abuse and issues of supply and/or treatment will need to be faced (Moth & Hudson, 1999).

It can be assumed that all released women will require shelter of some kind and that their fundamental physical needs for food and clothing will be pre-eminent. Their varied health needs are likely to be of concern to them. For some women this will mean making links with health providers in the community to ensure that medication and treatment that may have been initiated in prison, is continued.

They will all require economic support of some kind and many are likely to need to contact social service agencies in order to provide themselves with basic necessities. Whilst employment may be an option, it is likely that they will have difficulty in immediately obtaining employment and/or training when so many other matters need attending to.

Some will need to fulfil the conditions of their parole supervision and will need to connect with their local community probation service. Others will have to sort out the kinds of services and/or programmes they need in order to address their offending, if this is a release goal.

All of the women who are released are likely to have to face the perception of others towards them. New Zealand is a comparatively small country and some of the major newspapers in the main centres regularly publish details about criminal sentencing (for example, “The Press”, Christchurch). In some high-profile cases an inmate’s impending release is also likely to be widely publicised. The public may be interested in what a released offender intends to do and where they intend to live. Returning to a small community may present a released woman with daily reminders of her past. Many women may have to contend with assumptions about their criminality and their behaviour and may find a general scepticism of an offender’s ability to change. Few people are likely to be interested in, or be able to relate to, women’s experiences of imprisonment itself. There will be an expectation that, women will pick up the pieces of their existence and resume the societal roles they fulfilled prior to their prison sentences.

This study is about the journeys that 26 women took on release from Christchurch Women’s Prison, the only women’s prison in the South Island of New Zealand. The criteria for selection of the women were that they had to have been released from a prison sentence in the seven years prior to 1998 when the interviews took place. This study is about their experiences and the factors that influenced how they coped on release into the community. In order to understand the nature of their experiences and the factors that might have affected them, we need to look back at the history of the treatment of women offenders in Aotearoa/New Zealand and so contextualise, contemporary approaches. As part of this retrospective reflection, the wider international context will be considered to discern in what ways New Zealand’s criminal justice policy has been affected by developments elsewhere.

2.2 The history of women’s imprisonment in Aotearoa/New Zealand

There are few historical records in New Zealand that have described how women have coped after release from New Zealand prisons (Robinson, 1983). There are more comprehensive official records about women prisoners and it is these records that the social historian must rely on in order to obtain some impressions about women’s crime and what released women encountered over time. The language used to describe women’s crime in New Zealand and the imprisonment of women can be found in official records and in accounts by social commentators of the time. Changes in terminology reflect historical changes in the socio-cultural context. Terms such as “habitual”, “intractable” and “irredeemable” in relation to women offenders, and “punishment”, “confinement”,

“containment”, “reformation” and “rehabilitation” in relation to systems of justice, have come to symbolise longstanding notions about the treatment of crime and criminals. Such terms have been used at different periods in New Zealand Prison Department Reports and other related documents.

The first prisons for women in New Zealand were attached to male facilities. The earliest recorded gaols established in the 1840s, shortly after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, were rudimentary structures, nothing like the large concrete institutions we are accustomed to seeing today. Early European settlements in New Zealand had to rely on limited resources and access to public funds. The first gaol in Dunedin was described as a tent with leg irons and hand-cuffs (Hocken, 1898). Another early settler described the Dunedin gaol in the later 1840s as a “diminutive wooden structure”, which remained empty for some years (Torrance, 1877). Crime was referred to as minimal in the early days of settlement in New Zealand due to the hard work that occupied the new immigrants (Torrance, 1877). However, it was not long before the numbers of sentenced prisoners increased and the problem of gaol facilities began to be of concern to early prison administrators (Locke, 1978).

Few women were imprisoned during the period of early settlement in the colonial and provincial periods and those who were, were usually charged with drunkenness, vagrancy or prostitution and resided in cramped facilities with little privacy (Locke, 1978).

The problem of limited gaol facilities for women that were overcrowded and inadequate was highlighted in official inquiries into gaol conditions in the 1860s (AJHR, 1861). Concern about the inconsistency of gaol punishments and conditions contributed to a decision to remove provincial control of gaols and place their administration under central control in the 1870s. Ever since 1877, New Zealand prisons have been administered by central government from Wellington. The changes in administrative structure did little to alter the situation of women and official complaints continued about the effects of locking up young women who were first offenders with those of “utterly depraved character and habits” (AJHR, Vol II, 1878).

By the late 1870s, there were

...167 women in prison (compared with 877) men and they were found in 19 out of the 34 mixed gaols scattered throughout the colony, with most being confined in the main

Auckland, Dunedin, Addington (Christchurch) and Wellington gaols. The great majority of these women were prostitutes, imprisoned for vagrancy, drunkenness and disorderly behaviour, with a smaller number for 'concealment of birth'. The appropriateness of imprisoning such women was unquestioned.

(Department of Justice, Ministerial Review of Prisons, 1989, p.153).

Limited references to released women can be found in the early records of women's refuges. "Women were admitted, often ill, homeless or recently *discharged from prison*, suffering from the 'd'ts' or injuries inflicted in fights" and "many went 'over the fence' and ended up in gaol charged with drunkenness, theft or vagrancy." (Tennant, 1989, p.87, emphasis added). The impression gained of women prisoners during the nineteenth century and well into the next century was of a group that were frequently destitute and without financial means. Prostitutes and drunken women were perceived to be "plague spots" and centres of "vice". They continued to attract public opprobrium and were removed from the streets using various public disorder offences interchangeably (McDonald, 1977, p.23). Increasing concern was expressed in Prison Department reports about a group of women considered to be "incorrigible" and unaffected by prison punishment. Developments in prison reform overseas began to impact on policy-makers in their deliberations about how to deal with women offenders and particularly this group of persistent offenders.

By the early 1900s, New Zealand prison administrators were beginning to be influenced by the reformatory movement emanating from the United States and symbolised by the Elmira Reformatory of New York (McDonald, 1977). Reformatory ideals were aimed at effecting change of an offender's character by moral and social reformation. This was to be achieved by teaching the domestic arts, by spiritual tuition, "useful work and habits and cleanliness" (McDonald, 1977, p.36).

The paternalistic ideals of reformatory treatment, as applied to women, led to the adoption of indeterminate containment as a means to bring about change. It was thought that extended periods of imprisonment would give time for discipline to take effect and for habits to change. This was based on an optimistic assumption about what could be achieved by reformatory regimes (Rafter, 1990).

The notion of indeterminate sentencing was reinforced by eugenicist ideas about the need to protect the public from involvement with those women offenders who were considered to be incorrigible

and beyond redemption. Whereas the reformists saw the potential for change, the eugenicists ascribed biological determination to women's offending. Premier Robert Stout, considered to be one of New Zealand's early social reformers, was a member of the Prison Parole Board in New Zealand at the turn of the century. He was of the view that some criminal women should be incarcerated for the length of their productive lives, thereby ensuring that their "deficient" genes were not passed on to another generation (AJHR, H. 20, 1919, p.3).

Due to the nature of indeterminate prison sentences, women were reliant on the opinion of prison administrators and prison superintendents for determining their ultimate release date. Under indeterminate sentencing, prison administrators wielded considerable power over both men and women in this regard.

The conditions for women in the men's institutions continued to be unsatisfactory and women's organisations agitated for the setting up of separate, stand-alone facilities for women (Dalley, 1993). The first designated prison for women in New Zealand was constructed at Addington in Christchurch in 1911. The intention was to provide penitentiary containment for those women regarded as "incorrigible", and reformatory containment for women determined to be redeemable. The reality was that the one building received all kinds of female offender (Dalley, 1993).

In New Zealand, as elsewhere in the western world, women in prison were "from the beginning...treated differently from men, considered more morally depraved and corrupt and in need of special, closer forms of control and confinement." (Dobash, Dobash & Gutteridge, 1986, p6). Women in New Zealand, despite the shortlived provision of a woman-only institution, continued in the main, to be contained in facilities attached to the larger men's prisons. Women's divisions were in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin until 1974 when with the construction of the first purpose-built women's prison, Christchurch became the sole South Island centre.

The substantial reforms in New Zealand's criminal justice legislation that took place in the 1950s⁸, when prison reports refer to more "humane" and "reformatory" approaches, had little effect on the treatment of women. Women experienced limited employment opportunities compared with men in

⁸ The passing of both the Criminal Justice Act and the Penal Institutions Act in 1954 heralded new reforms.

the larger institutions. They were more likely to be employed in domestic work and usually inside prison buildings (Taylor, 1996). As a consequence of their smaller numbers and with only three women's facilities, women were more likely to be incarcerated considerable distances from their children, families and support networks.

The physical appearance of women's prisons in New Zealand has not changed substantially during the twentieth century. Both Mt Eden Women's Division and Arohata Prison (Wellington) currently occupy buildings that were constructed in the early 1900s. A set of units euphemistically named "self-care" units is now provided in the grounds of Christchurch Women's Prison. However, apart from independent cooking facilities, women in these units are still subject to the close type of scrutiny usually reserved for medium security classification in the men's prisons. Prison life for women in New Zealand still revolves primarily around state institutions, built much like mental hospital and other public institutions but with substantial security measures.

The most recent New Zealand prison census indicates that there were, on 18 November 1999, 102 women held at Arohata, 76 at Christchurch Women's and 28 at Mt Eden Women's Division (Department of Corrections, 2000a). The largest population centre in New Zealand is in the Auckland region (Statistics, New Zealand, 2000), yet the least number of women is contained in this centre. Short-sentence only women are confined in Auckland, with women receiving sentences of over two years held elsewhere. This means that in all likelihood, many women must face long periods of child and family separation as a consequence of imprisonment. Women prisoners themselves have described this separation as the most painful effect of incarceration (O'Neill, 1989; Taylor, 1996) and until such time as facilities are provided in Auckland this will continue to be a significant concern in terms of the welfare of children and families. What the separation means for the re-establishment of family ties once a woman is released can only be conjectured. There are insufficient data as yet, about the kinds of stress and associated relationship difficulties released women encounter, nor is it known whether such separations cause irrevocable damage to family relationships.

2.3 The characteristics of women in prison

2.3.1 *The proportion of the female prison population in New Zealand.*

The proportion of women in prison in New Zealand compared to men has not altered significantly for two hundred years. The highest proportion of women was imprisoned in the 1870s – 1880s when women constituted 11-17% of the total prison population.⁹ From the late 1890s to the beginning of the twentieth century this proportion fell from 9% in 1898 (AJHR, H. 20, 1899) to 7% in 1914 (AJHR, H. 20, 1915). A further reduction took place until by 1922, women constituted 5% of the prison population overall (AJHR, H. 20, 1923). During this time the actual numbers of women incarcerated remained between 60-90 women per Prison Department reports whilst the male prison population steadily rose from 353 in 1873 to 872 in 1920.

There were some marked periods of reduction in the prison population during the war years when both male and female numbers dropped significantly. However, since then, the proportion of women compared to men has remained at approximately 3% (Pallone, Eskridge & Newbold, 1996).

Whilst the proportion of women receiving sentences of imprisonment has remained relatively stable in comparison with men, their actual numbers have increased. In recent years, there has been a steady increase in the numbers of women in prison to the extent that by 1991, there were 139 women in prison as compared with 3682 men. In 1995, there were 151 women and 3981 men respectively and in the year 1999 both groups had risen to 206 women and 5479 men. Women, in 1999, constituted 3.6% of the prison population overall. There has been an overall increase of 33% in the New Zealand prison population in the eight years from 1991 to 1999.¹⁰

Despite the concern of some commentators about an increase in the numbers of women receiving prison sentences, the latest census indicates an overall increase for both genders during the 1990s (Dept of Corrections, 2000, p.51). It is interesting to note that increases in male imprisonment

⁹ Figures from AJHR, Prison Department Reports, H. 20, 1873-1877 and 1883-1890.

¹⁰ Figures for 1991 & 1995 from Ministry of Justice Prison Censuses, figures for 1999 from Department of Corrections Prison Census, 2000.

numbers do not elicit concerns about the effect of men's emancipation as do increases in the women's prison population.¹¹

Little is known about the factors that may have contributed to the increased numbers of women "inside". There have been changes to New Zealand's criminal justice sentencing that have increased the tariffs for certain offences and this may well have impacted on prison population growth. There is no doubt that given the potential costs of criminal offending to the community and to the taxpayer¹², this growth is of concern. Some commentators have argued that a "new" young female criminal has appeared (Lashlie & Pivac, 2000) in our society. This view was based on the perception that the number of young women sentenced to imprisonment for violent offences had increased. This view was based on a limited range of data, however, and would need to be explored more fully. The next chapter describes some of the known characteristics of women offenders in New Zealand, based on official demographics.

2.3.2 *Overall level of disadvantage*

Historically, records about women in prison in New Zealand have described a population that was poor, had low levels of education and employment, and high levels of substance dependency. It can be said that while the nature of women's poverty may have changed, owing to a state benefit system rather than charitable aid, women in prison continue to constitute a disadvantaged group (New Zealand Prison Census, 2000a).

In the past, women offenders were described as:

... hopeless and abandoned. Abandoned because she was constantly picked up for being drunk, disorderly and vagrant, helpless because she had accumulated a long string of convictions and had served numerous sentences of imprisonment which had no obvious effect on her behaviour.

(McDonald, 1977, p.23)

¹¹ Dr Mukherjee, an Australian sociologist, is quoted in *The Christchurch Press* 8/9/1983, attributing increases in women's imprisonment to emancipation and the effects of television.

¹² The cost of imprisoning one woman in New Zealand for a year is \$52,738 (Department of Corrections Communication Unit, 18 July, 2001)

Early prison administrators did not believe that it was worth educating such women (AJHR, H-20, 1893). Education programmes were not made available to women in New Zealand prisons until well into the last century (Taylor, 1996).

In recent years, the demographic facts recorded about women in prison reflect similar kinds of multiple disadvantage even though the socio-cultural context has changed substantially. In regard to women, Braybrooke and O'Neill's socio-biographical study of prison inmates in New Zealand highlighted that:

... a significant number are without partners and have children in their lives; most have no school qualifications; the majority are unemployed and living on welfare; and many are affected by health problems. In sum they are concentrated among the poor. The picture for male prisoners is broadly similar to that of female prisoners, but the profile of prison inmates offered by the prison census suggests that women may be even more starkly concentrated among the poor.

(Department of Justice, 1988)

It is not clear from the above study whether the effects of substance dependency and mental health issues were considered under the category of "health". What is clear is that when these factors are combined with socio-economic status then the overall level of disadvantage of women offenders may well be more severe. The next sections consider the status of women in prison in New Zealand from recent prison census data (Department of Corrections, 2000a).

2.3.3 *Education and employment*

According to the 1999 Prison Census, the majority of women inmates had left school without a qualification and nearly half had left before the fifth form of secondary schooling (Department of Corrections, 2000a, p.31). This means that almost half of the women at this point in their lives would have had to rely on low-paid occupations and unskilled work for their main form of employment. Some would have had to rely on family or state benefit systems to support them. After leaving secondary school, half of the women failed to obtain a qualification, although a small proportion (21%) attended job skills courses (Department of Corrections, 2000, p.31).

2.3.4 *Income status*

Of the sentenced women inmates in 1999, 73% were reliant on a form of social security prior to imprisonment, while 15% were in paid employment (Dept of Corrections, 2000, p.35). A small number (4.1%), described their primary occupation as crime, while 7% described “other” in terms of their income. The majority of women on a benefit were receiving the Domestic Purposes Benefit (36%) as opposed to male inmates who were mainly receiving the job seeker benefit (32%), (Dept of Corrections, 2000, p.35). The current rate of the Domestic Purposes Benefit for a parent with one child is \$221.37 nett per week (\$11,511.24 per annum) placing this particular group among the lowest income earners in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2000).

2.3.5 *Age*

There were no records of the ages of women inmates in Prison Department reports until well into the 1970s. In 1997 and 1999, two thirds of sentenced female inmates were 25 years of age and over (66% and 67% respectively) according to census data. This percentage is similar to that of men over the same period (67% and 69% respectively), (Ministry of Justice, 1997; Department of Corrections, 2000a). The following table shows the relative age distribution of women inmates in 1997 and 1999.

Table 2.1: Age of Women Inmates

Age	1997		1999	
17-19	27	13.0%	29	14.2%
20-24	39	18.8%	37	18.1%
25-29	34	16.4%	35	17.2%
30-34	36	17.4%	34	16.7%
35-39	30	14.5%	37	18.1%
40-49	21	10.1%	26	12.7%
50-59	14	6.8%	4	2.4%
60+	2	1.0%	1	0.05%
Total	207		204	

Sources: Prison Census, Ministry of Justice 1997; Prison Census, Department of Corrections, 1999.

As can be seen, the largest age cohort of women, comprising 67% is in the 20-39 year group over the two census periods. In terms of the life span, the economic cost of imprisonment at later stages in a woman’s life is likely to impact on her ability to sustain herself in retirement, particularly if in

the process of imprisonment she has lost the material and social assets she had acquired before sentencing. With limited years left in which to prepare for retirement, women may have to rely on systems of state support during these years. This is in addition to the practical difficulty of having to re-establish systems of social support in later years. Thus, the age of women may well have an impact on the ability to cope with being released and “starting over”.

Age distributions need to be considered in the context of policing and sentencing policies and how these impact on particular age groups. Whilst there has been concern about an increase in offending by younger women in New Zealand, (Television One, *Holmes Show*, Wednesday, 17 July, 2001), this is not borne out by the most recent Prison Censuses. One of the ongoing problems in discerning trends in age distribution and offending is the statistically small numbers of women offenders in New Zealand where relatively small increases in particular age cohorts can lead to predictions of possible trends. It would only take the implementation of a hypothetical new “get tough” on juvenile street crime in Christchurch to potentially swell the women’s prison population in this age cohort leading to predictions of a growing trend.

2.3.6 *Ethnicity*

There are some statistical trends, however, that remain consistent over long periods of time in relation to women in prison, and factors that relate to ethnicity are among these. Since the mid-twentieth century, there has been a marked increase in the numbers of incarcerated Maori women. The first time Prisons Department reports recorded the number of Maori women was in 1924 when there were 5 Maori women in prison as compared with 109 Maori men (AJHR, 1924, Vol III, H-20). At the same time, there were 69 women and 1,127 men in prison (AJHR, 1924). In other words, Maori women constituted .07% of the female prison population in 1924 and Maori men constituted 0.1% of the male prison population, at the same time. According to the most recent data concerning ethnicity, women who identify as Maori, constitute 59% of the women’s prison population (Department of Corrections, 2000). This compares with 51% of male inmates who identified as Maori at the same time (Department of Corrections, 2000). Of all the official demographic statistics that describe New Zealand inmate populations, this change in ethnic constitution is the most significant in terms of its nature and extent. Age distribution may change between some age cohorts from year to year and other characteristics such as economic status have remained the same over time. The factor of disparities based on ethnicity asks the question not only of social researchers but

also the wider New Zealand community, about what has occurred that has brought about such a dramatic shift. The later sections of this study that pertain to the Maori women who participated in this research illuminate some of the issues of criminal re-offending they see as significant for them. Discussion on the causative theories about the disparity between Pakeha and Maori imprisonment will be traversed in the context of broader notions about ethnicity in a later section in this study.

2.3.7 *Dependant children*

The Ministerial Inquiry into the Prison System in New Zealand in 1989 (*Te Ara Hou*), referred to the situation of the children and families of inmates in a chapter entitled “The Forgotten Children”. This chapter described the lack of data collected by prisons about the family status of inmates. Whereas since the 1990s the recording of family status has become commonplace, prior to that little information exists. A number of studies undertaken by women researchers during the 1980s and 90s revealed a growing concern about the situation of children of incarcerated mothers (Aikman, 1981; Kingi, 1999; O’Neill, 1989; Saphira, 1981; Taylor, 1996). The high percentage of women with responsibilities for dependant children has remained constant since data have been collected by researchers in the 1980s and 1990s. In August 1991, and August 1995, 57% and 60% of women respectively had dependant children prior to sentencing (Taylor, 1996). The most recent 1999 figures indicated that 56% of women had dependant children and the 1997 data indicated 58% (Department of Corrections Census, 2000a, p.38; Ministry of Justice Census, 1997, p.57). A much higher percentage of women caregivers were sole parents, at 76% in 1997 and 75% in 1999. This compares with 28% of male sentenced inmates in 1997, and 31% in 1999 (Ministry of Justice Census, 1997, p.57; Department of Corrections Census, 2000a, p.38). The factor of dependant children demonstrates another marked disparity between male and female inmates. It has implications for the fact, as mentioned earlier, that there are fewer women’s prisons and, therefore, women are more likely to be confined long distances from children, who up until sentencing have been dependant on their mothers as sole caregivers. In terms of reintegration, this presents an additional, potential obstacle for women who must return to resume relationships that may have been disrupted by years of separation.

2.3.8 *History of offending*

On the whole, New Zealand women in prison have had fewer previous convictions than their male counterparts. The rate of re-offending has been lower for women for many years according to a range of census data (Ministry of Justice, 1991, 1995, 1997; Department Corrections, 2000a). In the 1999 Prison Census, 25% of women inmates were classified as first offenders compared with 17% of men (Dept of Corrections, 2000a, p.21). The highest number of women at 43% had at least six previous convictions, as compared with 52% of men in the same category. A much higher percentage of men had more than 20 previous convictions at 10%, as compared with women at 3% (Department of Corrections, 2000a, p.21).

The offending-history data indicate that a significant proportion of women will continue to offend after release from a prison sentence. The fact of having had a prison sentence is one of the more obvious characteristics of the class of offenders in the criminal justice system considered to be “recidivist”. The “recidivist” label is ascribed to offenders who appear before the courts for further criminal offences. The label means that the “recidivist” risks higher tariffs for offending when reappearing before the courts because of the weighting given in sentencing practice to re-offending. The label is then applied in classification procedures on reception in prisons.

The role that imprisonment has in reducing re-offending must be questioned when it presents as such a common pre-disposing factor for those re-appearing before the courts. Little is known or understood about the effect of the institutional experience on re-offending in New Zealand. From Victorian times, prison administrators in New Zealand have expressed their concerns about “contamination”, or the effects of confining first offenders with hardened, repeat offenders. The Royal Commission in 1868 referred to “promiscuous” association between prisoners and the contamination of those women considered to be victims of circumstance rather than career prostitutes (AJHR, A, No.12, 1868). In recent years, a multi-million dollar industry has developed both internationally and in New Zealand, aimed at reducing re-offending. Department of Corrections programmes in New Zealand have been based on overseas research in this area and the annual prison reports describe a high level of attendance at programmes in prison aimed at reducing re-offending (Department of Corrections, 2000, p.33). However, the question of the efficacy of imprisonment itself remains a much debated issue, with lobby groups such as the Howard League for Penal Reform (New Zealand) advocating reduction of the use of imprisonment as an instrument

to control crime. The major theories and debates about the causes of re-offending will be considered in the course of the theoretical discussion to follow.

2.3.9 *Types of offences*

Whilst some commentators have argued that there has been a marked increase in the incidence of violent offending by women and particularly young women (Lashlie & Pivac, 2000) this is belied by offence data. Violent offences constituted 40% of the sentences of women in the 1999 Census where a violent offence was defined as the main offence (Department of Corrections, 2000, p.19). However, it can be inferred that since women in the “violent offence” category had shorter sentences as a group, the offences were at lower ends of the scale. The one exception to this general rule was the numbers of women in prison for homicide, which at 30.6% was higher than that for men at 21.6% (Department of Corrections, 2000, p.21). The higher numbers of women sentenced for homicide compares with figures from the United States, where national data from 1997 indicates 30% of women also in prison for homicide (O’Brien, 2001b, p.12). Another study has found that the majority of female homicides in the US (O’Brien, 2001b, pp.11-12) were committed against family members or intimates as compared with male homicides where the minority were committed against family members.

Nearly a quarter of the men in prison at the time of the 1999 Prison census were sentenced for sexual violence as compared with 1.5% of women (Department of Corrections, 2000a, p.21). This constitutes another significant gender disparity in offence type. In effect, “In proportionate terms, females were more commonly imprisoned for property, drugs and traffic offences than their male counterparts” (Department of Corrections, 2001, p.18). This difference in types of offences has been longstanding (Ministry of Justice, 1991, 1995, 1997). It raises the question of the appropriateness of imprisoning women, many of whom have committed relatively minor offences, and the majority of whom do not constitute a danger to the public. They will be contained in prisons with a minority of women who have committed more serious types of offences, in some cases over many years, and who may require high levels of security. This means that all of the women who are received at Christchurch Women’s Prison are likely at some point in their sentence to be confined in “Wing 2” where razor wire has recently been installed in the exercise yard to deter escapes. The fact that not a single woman inmate has escaped from Christchurch Women’s Prison itself, and not one woman has managed voluntarily to escape a particular wing, does not seem to have influenced prison

administrators in terms of security measures. The application of measures of dangerousness has far-reaching implications for women as they travel through the criminal justice process. The development of classification technologies will be explored more fully in later theoretical discussion.

The recent Corrections Law Review in New Zealand has reported some concern from members of the public and prison reform organisations about the release of prisoners from secure units in prisons directly into the nearest community (Department of Corrections, 2001). The concern is particularly focused on the isolated and protected surroundings a maximum or medium security prisoner may experience and the lack of preparation for release.

The determining factor in the process of acquiring a particular type of offence label and a classification of risk and dangerousness is through the sentencing process. That process is driven by sentencing policy and by decisions made by the New Zealand criminal courts. The following section deals with the goals of sentencing policy in New Zealand and their historical evolution.

2.4 The legacy of New Zealand's criminal justice sentencing policies

New Zealand's criminal justice history reflected, as did so many others of its institutions, its Victorian, colonial past. With the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, a system of English government and common law became sanctioned in New Zealand. Despite its ongoing interaction with aspects of Maori culture and an early "colonial" approach, it has remained until today a fundamentally English, Westminster system of law and governance. The views of early settlers towards criminality and its methods of control were determined by their own past experience. Their attitudes towards women offenders were likewise influenced and shaped by Victorian notions of femininity and morality. Such notions have in turn shaped the methods of approach to social control and response to women's criminal offending in New Zealand.

By the time of European settlement in New Zealand, significant changes had occurred in regard to the treatment of crime and of offenders in nineteenth century England. While the medieval period was characterised by physical, exemplary and public punishment, the modern period became characterised by forms of mass containment and control (Dobash, Dobash & Gutteridge, 1986). Foucault has referred to this shift from physical punishment to containment as a movement whereby,

from “being an art of unbearable sanctions, punishment has become an economy of suspended rights” (1979, p.11). Punishment, in his view, became the domain of warders, doctors, chaplains, psychiatrists, psychologists and educationalists, whereas, in the past, punishment was the domain of judge and executioner. He further contended that historical change in punishment is evidenced by advances in technological control measures that have come to be controlled by the professions. The professions have come to have a vested interest in punishment institutions.

Interest in the causes of crime and alternative treatments of crime is a relatively recent development. The judiciary in medieval times and well into the Victorian era, was not particularly concerned with causation and mitigation. Judges had comparatively few sentencing options and were constrained by the prevailing and accepted retributive responses to offending.

Women in traditional medieval society were expected to conform to Judaeo-Christian ideals of womanhood based on the “Madonna” or “Mary” ideal (Dobash, Dobash, & Gutteridge, 1986; Kennedy, 1993; Zedner, 1993). Failure to attain the Christian ideal risked being judged to be a “fallen” woman akin to Eve, following her succumbing to temptation. Social control and conformity of women to perceived ideals were assured by women’s concomitant lack of power in social, economic and political spheres. Religious ideals continued to pervade perceptions of femininity and in the Victorian era women were expected to be chaste and asexual, exerting morally correct influences, both over their children, and their husbands. A number of criminologists have described the powerful effect of Victorian attitudes towards women on societal responses to women’s crime (Carlen & Worrall, 1987; Dobash, et al. 1986; Heidensohn, 1985; Smart, 1977; Zedner, 1993). The perception of the criminal woman as a depraved, morally corrupt individual, who had abdicated her feminine responsibilities, and had not only offended against the law, but also against society, has also been well documented (Dobash et al., 1986; Zedner, 1993). Indeed, some writers have argued cogently that there are vestiges of this creation of double deviance and double jeopardy in evidence today. They argue that it still exerts an influence in the approach that the media and the public take towards women’s criminality. Dobash et al. (1986, p.1) have referred to perceptions of criminal women in Victorian times as a “pariah class, separate and distinct from the ideal, chaste and morally correct women of the Victorian era and this continues today”.

Early politicians and the judiciary in New Zealand expressed similar views about women’s criminality in the “new” country. Women prisoners were regarded as having “utterly depraved

character and habits” and as “abandoned prostitutes; lost to feeling, shame and everything else” (AJHR, 1878, Gaols Committee Report).

Response to crime and to criminal women in the new colony was modelled on Victorian responses. Criminal offences were dealt with by either a fine or imprisonment while punishment was perceived as primarily retributive and deterrent. The First Offender’s Probation Act, introduced in 1886, constituted the first attempt to provide an alternative to imprisonment. Its primary purpose was to reduce “contamination”, or the mixing of hardened criminals with first offenders who were regarded as malleable. There are few records available about the use of this first community-based sentence in regard to women. It may be conjectured that given the limited opportunities for women to earn independent income in the nineteenth century, they would have had difficulty in meeting the costs of fines and may well have had to resort to imprisonment.

More sophisticated responses to crime and the growth of community sanctions in New Zealand were dependent on the changes in knowledge about, and attitudes towards, offenders. The emergence of the discipline of psychology, and developments in the social sciences, witnessed increased acceptance of the treatment of criminals and attempts to reform them, both while incarcerated and in the community. Feminist criminologists have argued that psycho-biological and pseudo-scientific explanations for crime, which developed in the early twentieth century, cemented traditional, perceptions of women (Carlen & Worrall, 1987; Chesney-Lind, 1997). Thus, Lombroso and Ferrero, two students of phrenology¹³ in the late nineteenth century, referred to criminal women as having particular shaped skulls. They also argued that although there was a biologically determined, criminal type of woman, women were congenitally less inclined to crime than men. However, they thought that women made up for their lesser participation in crime with the heinousness of the few crimes they did commit (Lombroso & Ferrero, 1895). Other psycho-biological theories about criminal women, which were influenced by social Darwinism, suggested that women were biologically inferior to men and that this inherent weakness led to their criminality (Pollak, 1950). Early science adopted the misogyny of traditional beliefs and accommodated such beliefs in “new” science. Pollak was also of the view that women were intrinsically more cunning than men because of their ability to disguise their enjoyment of sex and they were, therefore, capable of manipulating men into criminal acts (Pollak, 1950). It is interesting to note, that while the science that underpins

¹³ The study of the shape of the skull to determine personality traits, including criminality.

biological determinism is arguably more sophisticated, similar notions about women's greater inclination towards emotional and psychological disturbance during menses have persisted well into the twentieth century (Carlen & Worrall, 1987; Edwards, 1984; Newbold, 1992).

The history of New Zealand's approach to women's offending has mirrored this misogynist view with an historical neglect of women offenders in the criminal justice policy-making arena (Dalley, 1991; O'Neill, 1989; Taylor, 1996; Ministerial Inquiry into the New Zealand Prison System, 1989). Accounts from New Zealand Prisons Department reports from the 1940s to 1960s present criminal women as more mentally incapable, emotionally disturbed, and more difficult to manage. Reference was made in *Crime in New Zealand* (1968) to criminal women as spreaders of venereal disease, and to the use of criminal law to regulate their sexual behaviour. Concerns about women's sexuality and morality occupied the public and the problem of the "wayward girl", were discussed in articles in the daily newspapers (Taylor, 1996). Moral attitudes towards women's sexuality and adherence to the "double standard" in regard to the sexuality of men and women, led to prolonged use of prostitution sanctions in New Zealand. The fact that soliciting laws in New Zealand have until recently targeted the sex worker, rather than the client, is continuing evidence of underlying double standards¹⁴. It is important for this study to acknowledge the inclination of criminal justice systems to focus on individual behaviour coupled with the role of prevailing attitudes, and their long-term effect on the situation of women. It can be argued that the additional control exerted in criminal law towards sex workers is an example of social control of women in terms of society's determination of where responsibility for sexuality lies.

2.5 Contemporary sentencing policies in New Zealand

It has been argued that there is no explicit set of sentencing principles in New Zealand that expresses New Zealand's penal philosophy and jurisprudential intentions (Hall, 1994, p. B/61). Despite the lack of a coherent policy, sentencing law in New Zealand represents the three main principles of criminal justice, being those of *retribution*, *deterrence*, and *rehabilitation*, and the type or sentence imposed may contain elements of each principle (Hall, 1994). Parole conditions imposed prior to release from prison may also represent all three principles although at this stage of the criminal justice process, rehabilitation through integration of the offender back into the community is the

¹⁴ Prostitution Law Reform was passed in 2003 and its effect has been to decriminalise prostitution.

primary goal, as opposed to incarceration. The imposition of parole conditions also has a control effect and may be seen as serving the dual purpose of deterrence and rehabilitation.

The Community Probation service, Department of Corrections has the statutory function of supervising parolees, or those inmates recently released from prison and those offenders sentenced to community-based sentences. Some of the women who participated in this study belonged to both categories of supervision. Community Probation can and does enter into partnerships with community organisations delivering services to offenders and it relies on such organisations to assist with monitoring and supervision. Some participants were involved with such organisations through which they received residential care and other kinds of generic support.

In the year from March, 1997, to February, 1998, there were 311 releases from women's prisons throughout New Zealand (Department of Corrections data). Out of these, 75 had parole conditions imposed as part of release. There were 70 women released from Christchurch Women's prison during the same period, with 20 requiring parole conditions. This figure does not also take into account the numbers who had community supervision orders from prior sentences left to complete after release from prison. The greater number of women is released without further statutory involvement; involvement with community support organisations, if these are available, is voluntary.

The next section considers salient characteristics of the environment that prisoners are released to and the kinds of support they may expect in the current social services climate in New Zealand. It can be argued that, at the point of release, women become more directly subject to the impact of social policy. The intersection between social policy and criminal justice policy is a neglected consideration in the contemporary social policy environment. This lack of national policy agency collaboration and co-operation has also been referred to in the recent Corrections Law Review (Department of Corrections, 2001, p.121)

2.6 The community's response to released women offenders in New Zealand

Given that the primary concern of this dissertation is the experience of women after release from a prison sentence and after their return to the Christchurch community, the nature of that community needs to be considered in terms of what women may encounter. A significant consideration in terms

of the release environment is the organisations that may intersect with released women after release. Some interactions may pertain to meeting immediate physical and survival needs whilst others may pertain to meeting more complex social needs. Some released women may return to paid employment and/or family/whanau economic support and will not require involvement with either State or voluntary agencies. This group is likely to be small, given the large numbers of women whose primary source of income prior to imprisonment is various types of State benefit (Department of Corrections, 2000a). This section primarily concerns those women who will require some form of social service aside from personal resources.

New Zealand has a mix of State, voluntary and personal social services sectors that provide for the needs of released women. Whereas the State played an institutional role in service provision during the mid-twentieth century, in recent years it has arguably assumed a residual role of minimal service provision (Rice, 1991).

An example of this shift in policy is the government grants that were given to organisations such as the New Zealand Prisoner's Aid and Rehabilitation Societies and that were controlled and disbursed by these semi-autonomous societies up to the 1980s. Since the 1990s such grants have become contestable funds on a national basis with extensive criteria and conditions for the agency to fulfil. Invariably, the voluntary sector continues to fulfil existing gaps in State service provision. The experience of stigma is discussed as a significant aspect of the community response to released women offenders.

2.6.1 The Role of the State Sector

When inmates are released, the Department of Corrections has an obligation to assist with transport for prisoners to the city in which they were sentenced, however, they may choose to go elsewhere. Transport from the train, airport, or bus terminal must be arranged by the prisoner, and in some cases may involve significant costs, which at present must be borne by families and friends. Whilst inmates are able to save money while in prison through their prison earnings, these average \$4.00 per week.¹⁵ Most of this amount is taken up with purchasing minor necessities¹⁶. Any savings are

¹⁵ Personal communication with Christchurch Women's Prison Trust Administrator (2001).

deducted from the inmate's entitlement to income support on release and there is, therefore, an incentive to spend prison trust monies prior to release.

Following transport to a place of residence, the formal support systems in place for released inmates are separate functions of two State agencies. The Department of Work and Income¹⁷ may provide direct money transfers to an inmate on release. Such grants are called "Steps to Freedom" and are a fixed, standard amount to all releasees. The amount, which was raised from \$167.00 to \$350.00 in 1991 is intended to cover all the financial needs of a released person for a period of two weeks. The released inmate must register for a State benefit on the day of release in order to receive income support after the two week period. Benefits are not backdated to the day of release, if for any reason they do not register immediately. The benefit may be applied for one week earlier than the two week stand-down period on the grounds of hardship although this is a discretionary decision based on a Department of Work and Income official's interpretation of what constitutes justified need. Once receiving a benefit, a released person is then entitled to the range of discretionary benefits and allowances provided for in the New Zealand Social Security Act (1964).

The Department of Work and Income requires that released inmates continue to meet outstanding debts with the Department that were incurred prior to imprisonment. If the person has previously reached full entitlement to advances of benefit or Special Needs Grants they will not be entitled to further advances on release. This has implications for inmates who are incarcerated frequently and who continually have outstanding debts to repay. Repayment of deductions may be fixed at the rate of 20% of benefit entitlement, which will have a significant impact on income levels.

There are no special entitlements for released women who assume the care of their dependant children. Where a single parent has been eligible to have her benefit maintained during the prison sentence in order to support her children, the full benefit is reinstated on release. There is no provision however, for extra expenses associated with a parent's release from prison. Whilst the Department of Work and Income policy and operating manual recognises the need for additional

¹⁶ Prisons currently provide toothpaste, toothbrush, soap and shampoo. Deodorants, hair conditioners, razors and so on must be funded by the inmate.

¹⁷ This Department has been subsumed under the Ministry of Social Development in 2002 and is now referred to as Work and Income. It was stand-alone at the time that interviews for the research occurred in 1999.

resettlement support for discharged psychiatric and psychopaedic hospital patients by way of establishment grants, it does not extend similar consideration to released prison inmates (Section 6.1.3.9, Income Support Operating Manual, 1999). This lack of similar recognition illustrates a residual notion of “deserving” versus “undeserving” poor reminiscent of Victorian charitable aid (Tennant, 1989). Arguably, those inmates released after upwards of ten years imprisonment have an equal if not greater need for re-establishment support than patients with shorter periods of hospitalisation.

The other major role of the State in terms of released inmates is the administration of community supervision orders through the Community Probation service. Community organisations may assist with the day to day supervision of Probation clients but the Probation service has the ultimate legal responsibility for their progress. It has been argued that, whereas in the past the Probation service has offered generic support to released inmates, in recent years it has focused primarily on its monitoring role in terms of addressing re-offending (Campbell & Marra, 2001).

There is no requirement on prisons or on the State to ensure that inmates are adequately housed on release. It is assumed that local Prisoner’s Aid and Rehabilitation Fieldworkers will be aware of a housing need and will assist in this regard. This is an example of the role that the voluntary sector takes in relation to this group. Fieldworkers comment that inmates’ accommodation is frequently burgled after they receive a prison sentence and they do not have the means to maintain rent or mortgages on existing homes unless they have private means (PARS fieldworkers, 1998). Released women will usually go to friends or family and to independent housing as a last resort owing to the costs of re-establishment. Provision of housing is an example of a mixed welfare policy where both the state and voluntary sectors have a role to play.

2.6.2 *The Role of Social Services and Social Work Practice*

The social services sector context in New Zealand had its origins in English charitable and religious institutions that were imported to New Zealand at the time of colonial settlement (Tennant, 1989). Many church organisations still active in the Christchurch area have longstanding traditions of operating in particular areas of welfare and social work, including particular roles in regard to prisons and released inmates. The Anglican City Mission and the Salvation Army have historically assisted both incarcerated and released prisoners with practical forms of aid.

There is little written in comprehensive form about social services in New Zealand. There are a number of agency-based reports and minor histories that record the individual, historical contribution that some agencies have made.¹⁸ A small number of introductory New Zealand social work texts offer a useful insight into the role of social work, in a variety of agency settings (Connolly, 2001; McDonald, 1998; Munford & Nash, 1994; Truell & Nowland, 2002). Thus limited, at present researchers must rely largely on agency records and anecdotal knowledge in regard to social services particularly in regard to the needs of released prisoners.

A typology of social services available to released women offenders may be constructed based on the practical experience acquired through my own social work involvement with Christchurch Women's Prison. Such a typology begins with the pre-release period, the immediate transition into the community and ongoing availability of services.

Within the prison environment women had access to the prison social worker and to the New Zealand Prisoner's Aid and Rehabilitation Society (PARS) on a voluntary basis. Involvement with the Community Probation service prior to release was based on statutory requirements that were part of the inmate's sentence. The Probation Officer had an obligation to provide transition support by way of referral to a range of appropriate social services. However, the social services recommended by Community Probation were usually those that were seen as contributing to reducing re-offending. In other words, generic social support was not necessarily part of the programme a Probation Officer might put in place.

The prison social worker may or may not become involved with pre-release and post-release matters depending on the specific service contract at individual prisons (Taylor, 1998). At Christchurch Women's Prison my own contract emphasised work within the prison environment and performance measurements were based on prison service delivery. However, this did not preclude post-release involvement entirely, and my role frequently extended to advice about and referral to post-release, social service support. This was particularly the case where released inmates had no statutory obligations on release and, therefore, no formal criminal justice follow up after release.

¹⁸ NZPARS, for example, has a small history book that was published in 1991.

A number of church agencies offered generic socio-economic support to released prisoners. Among these services were drop-in centres, food banks, second hand clothing and furniture stores and social work services some or all of which were provided by the Salvation Army, the Methodist Mission, the City Mission and the Baptist church. The knowledge about these services was made available in an *ad hoc* fashion based on the contact that an inmate might initiate with relevant personnel or with the agency.

The role of social services, as stated earlier, has rarely been explored in relation to re-offending. A recent study from the US involving intensive interviews with 18 female ex-prison inmates has suggested that successful integration depends on both a woman's sense of self worth and the ability to use family, correctional and community resources (O'Brien, 2001b). This study goes on to state that accessibility to community resources and practical assistance are necessary requirements of integration, however, it is acknowledged by the author that a number of intersecting factors impact on this process.

Community organisations likely to have contact with released women fulfil a range of purposes, from generic support to targeted attempts to address offending behaviour. Differing roles represent differing viewpoints about offenders and the nature of offending. Some organisations have entirely compassionate purposes to support released prisoners regardless of their offending, others have a purposeful approach in their assistance that requires the co-operation of the individual to address re-offending.

The four community organisations consulted in relation to their work with released women in the Christchurch area were:

- New Zealand Prisoners' Aid and Rehabilitation Society (PARS)
- The Family Help Trust
- Te Puna Oranga
- Ka Wahine Trust.

Three of the above organisations will be discussed and described in detail, as they provide comprehensive social services that have been developed primarily for released inmates. Te Puna Oranga provides sexual abuse counselling from a Maori perspective; working mainly with women

who are incarcerated rather than with those who have been released. This organisation provided a consultative role for this research in terms of women's cultural needs.

The information in the following paragraphs is based on interviews with staff and key people in the respective organisations. A limited range of written material in the form of descriptive pamphlets and annual reports was also collected to supplement interviews.

2.6.2.1 New Zealand Prisoners' Aid and Rehabilitation Society (PARS or NZPARS)

PARS is a voluntary, incorporated society, which receives the majority of its funding from the Department of Corrections. It has a lengthy tradition of working with prisoners and their families dating back to early in the last century. Its 2004 contract with the Department details the range of services the Department is prepared to fund. PARS is managed by a publicly elected, management committee that relies on a high degree of volunteer contribution to both management and service delivery in the organisation. Funding was for many years granted to the national body, by the then Department of Justice, with broad reference to the purposes PARS and its branches would fulfil. The organisation was able to determine how the grant was to be spent with the bulk of it for salaries of paid fieldworkers and a smaller amount for administrative costs. The new contract required by the Department of Corrections, and initiated in 1996, extensively detailed accountability mechanisms, which conformed to revised government accounting systems. These systems are primarily quantitative measurement systems that measure volume and type of work completed rather than quality and effectiveness. Funding under the new "managerial" public sector environment requires more specificity and justification (McDonald, 1998, p.80). The fact that a significant part of PARS work is undertaken by volunteers, on the basis of goodwill, was not considered in the new contract. It can be argued that the new contract constituted an example of the way in which governments can impose their values on the voluntary sector (Hawke & Robinson, 1993). The traditional role of PARS as a strong advocate for prisoners was potentially undermined by the dependency of the organisation on fulfilling the new criteria for State funding. It is hard to conceive that the relative imbalance of power in contract negotiations between a voluntary organisation such as PARS and the Department of Corrections would not influence the role of the society. Advocacy as such, was not recognised as a function that the new contract for services would allow (Contract for Service between PARS and Department of Corrections, 1996). From 1996, all public statements by the Society had to be provided to the Department before publication.

In the Christchurch area, at the time of conducting the field research for this study, there were four major prison facilities with a total prison population of 977 (23 April, 1999). During the week ending the 30th April, it was expected that 25 men and two women would be released. PARS (Christchurch) employed three full-time fieldworkers who provided generic support services to released inmates. In addition, the organisation had a part-time voluntary fieldworker and 67 other volunteers who worked in a number of capacities ranging from prison visiting to sponsorship for Home Leaves¹⁹ (PARS Service report for the month of April, 1999).

The fieldworkers were expected to provide release support to inmates who requested assistance and who were assessed as appropriate for fieldwork support. The aid offered by PARS was not restricted to those inmates who declared an intention to “go straight”. Aid covered a wide range of activities, including pre-release preparation and advice/information to released prisoners, and limited forms of practical, direct aid such as small financial contributions towards the costs associated with release. There were no ceilings on client contact or workload, as these were at the fieldworkers’ discretion and there was no cost to PARS clients for services received. Clients were able to participate in the management of the service through the democratic committee process. According to the staff, ex-inmates have served on the PARS Management Committee from time to time (PARS fieldworker, 1999). Because of the public accountability of incorporated societies, the annual elections to the Committee can be subject to special interest “takeovers” which may produce undue influence by particular interest groups. Incorporated societies may not only be subjected to rapid management change but also risk a degree of instability in terms of practice skills and knowledge, with changes in membership (Hawke & Robinson, 1993). It is for this reason that a large proportion of the voluntary sector is now made up of trusts as opposed to incorporated societies because of the inherent stability of trusts.

2.6.2.2 The Family Help Trust and New Start

The Family Help Trust is an example of another kind of voluntary organisation set up in the Canterbury area to support families and children deemed to be at-risk. Many client families of this

¹⁹ These Temporary Releases are permitted under the Penal Institutions Act (1954) and are intended to assist with re-integration with families/whanau.

organisation have been involved with the criminal justice system. This organisation has had a different evolution from PARS and developed in response to a changed voluntary sector environment. It was established in 1991 by a group of social workers and other health professionals who were concerned about the lack of support for “at risk” families. This concern arose partly from the changes in the role of the then Department of Social Welfare and its shift from preventative care and protection to a more risk management focus. A number of the early Family Help Trust members were past employees of the Department of Social Welfare and were concerned about growing gaps in service provision. The organisation’s initial aim was to “confront the causes of family dysfunction, and to provide high risk families with the skills they need to improve their lives and those of their children” (New Start, Information booklet, 1999, p.2). It later became focused on targeting chronic offenders in the Christchurch area in the belief that this particular group was likely to create high-risk environments for their children. Whilst the research on which the Family Help Trust relied for supporting its focus on low socio-economic families linked problems of adolescence with a range of causal factors (Fergusson, Horwood & Lyndskey 1994), the Trust approach has been to focus on offenders’ families. The programme that was set up to provide intervention with offenders in the community was called the “New Start” programme. In order to qualify, clients needed to have a child or children under the age of three years (although this criterion has since changed to under five years). Clients were also required to have the desire to “go straight” in that “...prison life is no longer what you want...” and to be “...part of your family and be there for your kids” (New Start brochure, 1999).

Unlike PARS, the Trust is made up of invited members and patrons; during 1999, the Regional Commander of Police was chairperson of the Board. The committee at its inception was made up of professionals, business representatives and local council representatives. The Director of Programmes was also a Board member and managed the organisation. Whilst a trust such as this is required to furnish an annual report, members may stay indefinitely unless the Trust Deed determines otherwise. Funding for the Family Help Trust was almost entirely from charitable organisations and business donations, with the Department of Corrections also contributing. Clients of the service must contract-in to home visiting and to assessment and intervention planning. Interventions may consist of advice, individual advocacy, referral and generic support, with the emphasis on the needs of the children.

There were three full-time workers employed in the New Start programme in 1999 (Family Help Trust was the umbrella organisation). They had an average caseload of fifteen families and worked with clients for up to two to three years, or as required. The support was of a practical, social work nature involving advice, information, referral, counselling as required, and help with practical tasks. There was no cost to clients of the service.

Unlike the incorporated society, there was no public input as such, and no mechanism by which consumers could participate in decision-making. There were comprehensive evaluations of quality of service delivery conducted with clients after six months on the programme and this could include reviews of family functioning and compliance with agreed goals. The service was offered to both men and women, with women as primary caregivers representing a small minority.

2.6.2.3 *Ka Wahine (ki Otautahi) Trust*

Another Trust providing specific services to released women in the Christchurch area is the Ka Wahine Trust that was set up in 1990 by a PARS fieldworker and myself at the time that I was employed as a prison social worker. The lack of availability of low-cost housing and support to released women were recognised at the time as presenting problems for released women. The purpose of Ka Wahine was to provide supportive housing for women with some limited programmes to assist their reintegration. Housing was not conditional on addressing re-offending although compliance with the conditions of residence was required. The house was supervised 24 hours a day, by day and night time staff, and it housed 8 women at a time. The Trust was made up of invited members with the manager of Christchurch Women's Prison as an advisory board member. Other members represented churches and related organisations such as PARS. It was funded through a variety of sources but primarily through the Community Funding Agency of the Department of Social Welfare and by the Department of Corrections. The house belonged to a Catholic order of nuns and was rented by the Trust; the Sisters of Mercy retain one board member as of right. The Trust has a Maori *kaupapa*²⁰ outlined in its philosophies and Deed. Residents must agree to participate in the Maori kaupapa but are not required to be of Maori descent.

²⁰ A set of beliefs about ways of operating determined by Maori values.

The Trust has allowed the participation of some released women on the Board but this led to some problems in the past. There were no mechanisms in place for external evaluation of the service apart from compliance with Community Funding Agency criteria. Complaints were dealt with internally, and usually by the worker on duty at the time. Effectiveness in terms of addressing re-offending was not monitored, as this was not a primary goal of the service. Women were able to reside in the house for up to six months with regular review periods. The goal of the service was to enable women to reside independently in the community.

As described thus far, the two government departments that have a designated role in regard to released inmates and the three community organisations described represent a wide spectrum of purpose, history, place and structure. Each offers a different role in terms of released women ranging from basic income support and generic services, to targeted surveillance and support. Partly as a consequence of the nature of each service, their relationship with released women represents different motives and different requirements. Each community organisation was set up in order to benefit ex-inmates but with particular views about their respective roles and responsibilities.

Ka Wahine was the only service out of the five that had been set up to specifically meet the needs of released women, whereas the other organisations provided co-gendered services. Ka Wahine was also the only service to offer a strong Maori perspective aimed at embracing a bi-cultural approach to service delivery.

The PARS fieldworkers spoke about the pressure of the greater numbers of male prisoners and how there was a risk that the needs of released women could become subsumed by the greater demands of released men. Little is known about whether the needs of released women are inadvertently overlooked because of an organisation's preoccupation with the greater numbers of released male inmates. Little is also known about whether social services for released women adequately take into account cultural differences and indeed, how they may contribute to the well-being of released Maori women.

The Family Help Trust workers spoke about the processes that released inmates had to follow in order to receive their State benefits and how these obstructed their access to support. The requirement to provide an official birth certificate in order to apply for a benefit required a \$14.00 fee, which some released inmates found difficult to pay. Neither of the government departments

involved with released prisoners had mechanisms in place to consult with released prisoner recipients of their services. Both departments represented centralised bureaucracies, with the primary function to administer legislation, regulations and government policy. If problems were encountered by recipients of state benefits these could only be processed through official complaints procedures or by recourse to the Ombudsman. The three community organisations clearly had more comprehensive means of evaluating client concerns and provided avenues for clients to influence policy development. However, their ability to address and advocate for some client concerns was potentially curtailed by new State funding criteria, as evidenced by the example of the PARS contract for service. Some of the community organisations may have also been restricted by other forms of state funding where accountability criteria have increased (McDonald, 1998). Despite the fact that the community organisations were more likely to employ programme evaluations it is questionable to what extent the outcomes of these may drive organisational policy (Mayer & Timms, 1970).

The overall impression an observer gains from a broad appraisal of services for released inmates is one of *ad hoc* and haphazard access and availability. Whereas many other groups in the community are able to organise into communities of interest and exert influence over policy direction at both local and national levels, released inmates constitute an amorphous group. There is potential ability for released prisoners to organise a united response to the various government departments and community organisations involved with them through some community groups but these are likely to be dominated by other community members. There is also the possibility that released inmates do not possess a set of shared interests that enable a united response in the first instance. However, without the means to consult and without a coordinated community response to released inmates, their needs will remain the subject of conjecture and of uncoordinated, *ad hoc* responses.

2.6.3 *The Role of Stigma*

There is no doubt that aside from parole conditions that may be imposed on released women, the majority of this group will experience other controls and potential obstacles in the community. An all-encompassing way that social control may be exerted has been described in Goffman's seminal work on stigma; the negative discrimination applied to, and experienced by, persons who are perceived to be different in a negative way (Goffman, 1968). Thus, sex workers have described their experience of applied stigma in the court system when their cases have been dealt with (Page, 1984,

p.13). In such settings, they risk not only public opprobrium directed towards their occupation but also the application of criminal sanctions.

Women offenders likewise have described their sense of stigma after receiving prison sentences and the difficulty this creates for them after release (Carlen, 1988; Carlen & Worrall, 1987; Heidensohn, 1985). They describe both situations of “felt” stigma where they have expectations of how others will respond to them, and “applied” stigma where they are subjected to negative discrimination (Carlen, 1988). Negative discrimination may be applied in areas such as accommodation, and is likely to be applied in regard to employment where disclosure of criminal sentences is required in job applications.

Women on release from prison may experience multi-levelled discrimination due to multiple types of disadvantage. Page (1984) has described the stigma that is attached to poverty and the internalisation of felt attitudes about the poor. According to the demographic data about women in New Zealand prisons, it may be assumed that the majority will have limited financial means on release. They may also belong to minority cultures which in itself may contribute to perceptions about them. The negative social statistics widely publicised about Maori, risk the perception of Maori as a “criminal” sub group. Maori women, who have a criminal history, have the added disadvantage of acting outside the “norms” of femininity. Additionally, low levels of educational attainment, and lack of employment skills and opportunity, all potentially contribute to the experience of stigma by women who are released into the community. The notions of double deviance and double jeopardy can both be related to the effects of stigma when applied to women offenders.

Another consequence of entering the criminal justice process is the impact that systems labelling may have on individuals. Current classification methods and risk and needs assessments (IOMS or Integrated Offender Management System) apply labels to offenders according to their level of perceived risk. The term “life sentence” denotes a person who has committed murder and this label will apply for the remainder of a person’s natural life. The fact that the murder may have been committed by a woman, as a consequence of domestic violence, associated with a particular partner, may well mean that there is minimal risk to any other individuals. The label of “serious violent offender” under the Criminal Justice Act (1985) carries with it penalties and consequences of particular treatment in institutions. The effects of the label are to raise expectations about this

particular group and how individuals so categorised may behave in institutions. Labelling of this kind may lead to the internalising of notions that may affect a person's identity making it more difficult to change.

In order to explore these and other influences on the perception of women offenders, and consequently their treatment on release from prison, we need to look to theories about women's crime that have flourished in recent years.

Conclusion to Part One

The demographic and offence data about women prisoners in New Zealand highlight a number of areas of significant difference between male and female offenders. In the main, New Zealand's criminal justice legislation has been developed based on gender neutrality apart from some select types of crimes, yet there are longstanding gender disparities in terms of the roles and responsibilities of men and women prior to sentencing, and in the types of offences they commit. The offence data alone, suggests the possibility of gender-specific factors operating in relation to offending. The differences in the broader demographic data suggest different kinds of motivation on the parts of men and women in regard to criminal offending. The demographic data supports the overall impression of women in prison as a group that experiences multi-layered levels of social and economic disadvantage.

There are noticeable absences from the official data recorded about women. The reasons as to the inclusion/exclusion of certain kinds of data in the New Zealand Prison Census are not clear from the reports themselves. It can only be conjectured as to why, for example, levels of substance dependency are not recorded in census data when this factor is widely reported about prison populations in New Zealand.²¹ Likewise, the level of victimisation experienced by women in prison has not been recorded in census data despite the fact that a high incidence has also been reported (Moth and Hudson, 1999; *Te Ara Hou*, 1989²²). Recent international research has focused attention on the way that victimisation of women may be connected with substance abuse and how these two factors may influence pathways into criminal lifestyles (Chesney-Lind, 1997; Katz, 2000; McLellan, Farabee & Crouch, 1997; Widom, 1989).

Another significant gap in official data relates to the re-offending levels of Maori women as opposed to Pakeha and other ethnicities. Given that the official data have already established a wide disparity between Maori and Pakeha rates of imprisonment, it seems logical that data also needs to be collected in regard to rates of re-offending. It may be that, if Maori women have a higher rate of re-offending, there are additional factors operating after their release from a prison sentence, differentially influencing their ongoing involvement with the criminal justice system.

²¹ The Ministerial Review of Prisons in 1989 recorded an estimated 80% of women with substance dependency.

²² Otherwise known as the Ministerial Review of the New Zealand Prison System, 1989.

When the census data and the picture that these facts elicit of women inmates as a socially disadvantaged group, are combined with the description of relevant social services available for re-integrative support on release, an overall picture of compounded disadvantage begins to emerge. It would seem that unless a released inmate is subject to supervision on release, access to, and availability of, services and support, is a haphazard affair. The attitude of the community towards offenders and towards women's crime is likely to determine community approaches and impact on the issues of access and availability.

The questions about the ideas and attitudes that society has towards women's crime and how this has shaped and determined who is imprisoned can only be answered by considering the wider, theoretical context of women and crime. Consideration of this context may also help to explain why there are significant gaps in our knowledge about this particular group.

The next chapters will turn to criminological theory and information about criminal justice sentencing in order to make it possible to derive meaning from the demographic and offence data and understand the rationale that underpins the range of social services available to released women. The objective in traversing the wider theoretical context is to consider the merits of a range of historical perspectives that have attempted to explain the aetiology of women's crime and gender differences in crime. This will also help to explain the development of different historical approaches to women's crime in New Zealand as significant theory has impacted on policy and practice.

PART TWO: THEORIES OF CRIME AND RECIDIVISM

Introduction to Part Two

Part Two begins with a consideration of the language of crime and semantic understandings that are commonly shared but rarely analysed in regard to their implications for criminal justice. The difficulties associated with strict legal definitions of crime are discussed, and alternative definitions are suggested that more accurately reflect social science considerations.

Since theoretical writing and research about women's crime is a relatively recent academic development, it has been necessary to traverse broad criminological theories in the first instance. Classical theory and positivism are touched on in order to highlight ideological shifts in criminology. Sociological ideas such as *strain* and *control* theories were developed on the basis of understandings of crime committed almost exclusively by men. Historically, they created a theoretical context out of which a feminist anti-thesis developed. This anti-thesis has come to be described as feminist criminology and has begun to occupy an enduring place in criminological discourse. The development of a feminist paradigm in criminology is explored in order to place this particular piece of research within a growing feminist understanding of women's crime and crime causation.

In the middle section of Part Two, the notion of re-offending and what defines this aspect of crime is discussed in a more comprehensive fashion, as these concepts are central to the research. The factors associated with re-offending and how these have come to be assumed and absorbed into contemporary criminological discourse are discussed. Recent developments in research about re-offending that demonstrate a variety of theoretical standpoints are traversed. Throughout the impacts of significant stages of research and theory development on women and on the approaches to women re-offenders, are analysed. The recent preoccupation with risk and need, measurement and assessment, is evaluated in terms of the implications for women in the criminal justice process. The notable absence of consideration of the capabilities and strengths of released women is introduced as a significant weakness in the dominant risk paradigm. The continuing focus on individual deficits rather than individual and community capacity has produced a knowledge deficit. Recognising this gap has contributed to the research project itself and will be explored in relation to the research

theory and methodology in Part Three. Part Two closes with an attempt to synthesise the disparate theories in relation to crime in a way which informs the philosophical and theoretical underpinning of the fieldwork to be described in Part Three.

Chapter Three

The semantics of crime

The primary concern of this thesis is women's criminal offending and increasing our understanding of what causes women to re-offend. It is useful, therefore, to consider the ways in which notions of women's offending have evolved, and how this informs contemporary attitudes and approaches to women's criminal offending.

Such a subject cannot be considered in isolation from the changing attitudes towards what constitutes normalcy in terms of women's lives. Notions of what constitutes criminal offending co-exist with expectations of what is considered to be "normal" as opposed to "deviant". The term "deviant" for the purposes of this work is used here as a reference to that which is determined as deviant by criminal law in modern western democracies. There are semantic and philosophical difficulties in using the term "deviant" created by the wider, mainstream use of the word. In a postmodern context it can be argued that children who are raised in environments where criminal offending is the norm, will not in fact be "deviating from what is accepted as normal or usual" (Oxford Dictionary, 2000, p.220) should they begin offending themselves. A postmodern analysis of their situation would accept their perception of normalcy as valid within that paradigmatic context.

Criminal deviance as opposed to deviance *per se*, is defined in society as a whole by criminal law. While this is a benchmark for determining that which is considered criminal, there are problems inherent in purist legal definitions of deviance as they cannot adequately account for the substantial challenges presented by alternative perspectives of the aetiology of criminal offending. Marxist sociologists would argue that criminal law usually punishes the behaviour of the working class and poor and is less concerned with the behaviour of the wealthy (Box, 1987; Greenberg, 1981). Marxist criminologists refer to the lack of emphasis in criminal justice systems on white-collar crime and its policing, as one way in which the more obvious crimes of the poor are targeted. The potential effect of this emphasis in law enforcement, on more visible types of crime, is to create a situation where working class people as a group may be perceived as more deviant.

Feminist perspectives on criminal law ask questions about who makes the law and whose interests it serves (Carlen, 1988; Kennedy, 1993). Documented women's history confirms that until the late twentieth century in western democracies, many laws favoured men over women where conflicts

involving gender arose (Kennedy, 1993). The majority of feminist criminologists place women's criminal offending within the framework of women's gendered place in society as a whole and as another expression of the social control of women which exerts itself in other spheres (Carlen, et al., 1985; Carlen, 1988; Morris, 1987; Naffine, 1997). Feminist analysis has created the concepts of *double deviance* and *double jeopardy*, whereby women are doubly punished when they criminally offend. Firstly, they are viewed as deviant because they have committed a criminal act, but they are considered additionally deviant because they have breached the norms of what is considered to be acceptable female behaviour (double deviance). Secondly, they may risk harsher penalties in the criminal justice system for having breached expected norms associated with femininity (double jeopardy).

Other challenges to the strictly legal definitions of criminal offending are presented by cultural explanations and definitions of crime. These explanations consider, in similarity to the Marxist and feminist perspectives, that the dominant culture determines criminality and imposes its definitions on minority cultures whose customs may be based on an entirely different paradigm. The notions of traditional English justice are based on individual behaviour, and Enlightenment rationality, and this is in conflict with the collective, customary social control practised by other cultures. In the New Zealand context, Jackson (1988) referred to the effects of colonisation leading to Maori involvement in the criminal justice system. He referred to traditional concepts of offending and customary sanctions and described the impact of colonisation on the social, economic, spiritual, and psychological development of Maori. Jackson made no special reference to Maori women's experience of either traditional, customary forms of justice, or the current criminal justice system.

The legal criminal code, then, determines what behaviour constitutes "offending" as opposed to normal behaviour, in a way that reflects the views of the dominant gender, class and culture. This thesis considers how women offenders themselves perceive and describe their offending and the meanings they attach to terminologies, which are applied to them. The fact that the majority of research and theoretical development about criminal offending has largely been based on men's experience means that this work will explore their applicability to women's experience.

An additional problem inherent in the legal definitions of criminal behaviour, apart from the difficulties presented by the perspectives outlined earlier, is that these cannot reflect offending which exists outside reported, recorded and controlled criminal offending. As many practitioners

involved in the criminal justice process know, criminal offending does not simply occur at the times that offenders come to the attention of control authorities. A social science approach to such offending would be that it constitutes a human behaviour, situated temporally and spatially, and which occurs despite official control systems. Crimes themselves are defined by the legal system but the legal system has difficulty in accounting for their extent and aetiology in the community. The social science approach more readily serves the purpose of this thesis and is more likely to be able to take account of gender and ethnicity. Nevertheless, the social science approach needs to take account of legal definitions of what constitutes a crime, despite their limitations.

Social history has provided an influential insight into the development of crime and the treatment of crime. It is through understanding changes in criminal law, reflecting changed attitudes towards offending and towards women, that it becomes possible to begin to explain the contemporary treatment of women in the criminal justice system. Social history, with the benefit of hindsight, has been able to chart political and social influences on definitions of criminal offending and women offenders. The New Zealand Criminal Code Act, 1893, had its origins in Victorian England and while many offences have since been repealed or have evolved to reflect advances in social science research and changed attitudes, a substantial number remained in legislation for the major part of the next century. A direct and recent example of the effects of changes in societal attitudes was the repeal of sections of the Summary Offences Act in New Zealand regarding prostitution. The laws pertaining to soliciting until recently still applied to women only and reflected the existence of a residual double standard (Section 148, The Crimes Act, New Zealand, 1961). It is only recently that rape within marriage came to be considered a crime (Criminal Justice Amendment Act, 1985) and the specific exclusion of married men from being sanctioned for rape of a wife was a profound statement about women's relative social power at the time.

Women's criminal offending in New Zealand attracts its share of public attention, debate and concern. The gendered issues that surround such debates influence the treatment of women offenders and prisoners. A case in point was the television documentary concerning Tania Witika (Television Three, 20/20 programme June, 1998), which portrayed her as a woman affected and influenced by her abusive partner as explanation for killing her child. Its screening raised considerable debate in ensuing letters to editors and radio talkbacks. The issues of culpability, and considerations of victimhood were strenuously debated in terms of how far a "battered" woman should be held accountable for crimes which, it was argued, she committed out of fear and lack of a

means to escape otherwise. The New Zealand Law Commission has recently released a discussion paper that suggests changing New Zealand's criminal law so that a "battered woman" defence can more readily be accepted by the legal system (New Zealand Law Commission, 2001).

The New Zealand Crimes Act (1961) and its later amendments, defines criminal offences by and large, as gender-neutral, that is, both men and women are held accountable in the same way for similar offences. There are a significant number of gender-specific crimes, which it can be argued either disadvantage or advantage women according to one's perspective. Some offences, such as rape, take account of biological differences. On the one hand, a woman can be sentenced to being a party to rape but legally cannot be the perpetrator of penile rape. The sentence of infanticide, on the other hand, is specific to women only, and there are gender-specific psychological conditions which the offender must meet in order to fulfil the conditions of this offence. Now that New Zealand has a relatively more enlightened attitude to joint child care responsibilities, it is possible that a father who is the sole caregiver may meet similar pre-conditions in order to satisfy the conditions of this offence. The wording of the Act defines Infanticide as a condition pertaining to mothers, however, and it cannot in its present form be applied to men. The recent trial of a woman for sexual assault in Wanganui (*Herbert v R*, HC, 1998) has highlighted the fact that women cannot be charged with sexual assault on young men. According to media statements following the trial, an amendment to the Crimes Act is being considered by the New Zealand Law Commission.²³ The above examples demonstrate the way that the socio-cultural context can and does influence the process of legal reform, despite the fact that such considerations may not be given weight in the sentencing process in terms of their influence on the actions of individual offenders.

On the whole, the Crimes Act applies across genders, but in practice, as the earlier consideration of differences in offending by men and women has shown, some offences are more likely to be committed by men than women and vice versa. Consideration of gender differences has the potential to lead to greater understanding of why women commit some kinds of offences more than others, and why the extent of their offending continues to be minimal in comparison with men. This is pertinent to this study, in that women's re-offending after release from a New Zealand prison is likely to reflect established patterns of female offending.

²³ The New Zealand Minister for Justice, Hon, Phil Goff, has recently (March, 2004) foreshadowed amendments to the Crimes Act that will rectify gender inequalities in sentences.

The relatively recent increase in numbers of women committed to New Zealand prisons, referred to earlier in the discussion where the proportion of women in prison was compared with that of men, has not been explained. The increase in New Zealand matches similar increases in the UK (Carlen & Tchaikovsky, 1996), the US (McQuaide & Ehrenreich, 1998) and Australia (Quadrelli, 1997) where new women's prisons have been built in response to rising female numbers. The increase in women in prison in the UK has not been attributed to increases in recorded crime, according to a recent British Crime Survey. The survey reported that while there was a public assumption that crime was increasing, it had in fact decreased in most significant groups of crimes.²⁴ The increase in numbers of sentenced prisoners was attributed to a harsher custodial sentencing regime (Guardian Weekly, January 18, 1998) with longer sentences attached to various crimes. Whilst changes in sentencing regimes are not the subject of this exploration of women's re-offending, there is no doubt that longer tariffs in criminal law may impact on women's crime and on the number of women in New Zealand prisons.

There are a number of problems with relying on official offence statistics, not the least of which is the impact of differing policing and sentencing policies, and the difficulty of measuring unreported crime in the community. This research with released women prisoners has not relied on official, recorded crime alone. Official statistics can indicate quantities and enable comparisons to be made between various offender groups, but will not answer the question of why certain offences are committed by women and re-committed by women after release from prison. Most importantly, they will not indicate frequency and the impact of offending on the lived experience of released women. Answers to such questions as these, require the involvement of women offenders themselves in reflection upon their relative situations, and the contexts in which they live.

In the process of focusing on women it is necessary to consider first, the criminological theories which have been developed in western democracies by and for men and which have impacted on women. The history of theoretical development in the social science arena, along with other disciplines, shows a neglect of consideration for women and the automatic assumption that men's experience is equivalent to, and can be imposed on, women's experience. The result has been an androcentric world view, which has limited and defined women's perceptions of the world (Du Bois, 1983). The New Zealand criminal justice system has not been immune to the prevailing

²⁴ British Crime Survey, 1997, Home Office, London, UK.

androcentric views created by previous generations. There are many facets of life which reveal the discontinuities in men's and women's lives. Sexual abuse and domestic violence are but two areas where feminist researchers and writers have in recent years revealed the imbalance between genders and differential experiences. There has been little exploration of gender differences and commonality in relation to criminal offending. The predominant trend throughout history has been to attribute similar motivation and causation of criminal offending to women based on men's experience. It is possible to argue that this is justified, that criminal justice is dispensed and experienced in a gender neutral fashion. If this were found to be true, the subject would not be worthy of further study. However, the considerable disparity between the incidence of men's and women's offending alone, requires one to question such neutral assumptions. Assumptions of neutrality can also not be sustained when disparate consequences eventuate from what is determined to be equal treatment.

Chapter Four

Women and crime: women and re-offending

This chapter briefly reviews crime theories that relate to perceptions and understandings of women's criminality. This initial discussion is of necessity a brief one given that the primary focus of the research is women's re-offending. It then proceeds to a more in-depth and detailed consideration of theories of women's criminal recidivism.

4.1 Women and theories about crime

Research and writing about crime and criminal behaviour, reveals a wide spectrum of explanations for female criminality. Opinions differ according to particular perspectives, for example those writers who subscribe to endogenous explanations for human behaviour will differ from those who support exogenous explanatory theories. The nature/nurture debate is expressed in criminology, just as it is in other fields of human science.

Classical crime theorists focused originally on the crime itself and advocated retributive forms of justice (Mannheim, 1960). The recent "just deserts" policy instituted in some areas of the United States is an example of punishment based on the crime. Such a policy does not take account of the individual differences of the offender in terms of their motivation to offend. The fact that one person may offend based on economic motivation, and another may do so for psychological reasons would not be taken into account in classical theory.

Classical criminology was not concerned with women's crime. Where the focus is on the criminal act and not on the criminal agent, issues of gender, social class and ethnicity are irrelevant. Classical 19th century criminology rendered women invisible, and consequently there is little writing or research from this period that records women's experience of criminal justice (Zedner, 1993). What is known from official records and the limited accounts of the time is that while female offending was ignored by the theorists the female offender was treated "far more harshly than her male counterpart" (Zedner, 1993, p.40).

The positivist school of the early 20th century applied early scientific method, developed in the natural sciences, to criminological inquiry. Early positivists such as Garofalo (1852-1934) and Ferri

(1856-1929) applied biological theories to crime which were later discredited (Mannheim, 1960). However, as some feminist criminologists have pointed out, strands of biological determinism endured, albeit in more sophisticated forms (Carlen & Worrall, 1987; Naffine, 1997; Smart, 1977). The later positivists subscribed to a more utilitarian view of crime and considered the criminal as an individual with different needs according to scientific understandings of human behaviour (Mannheim, 1960). They considered the protection of society to be paramount in the treatment of criminals and believed that understanding the different motivations to commit crime would lead to better control of crime. The application of scientific method in the positivist tradition has continued to dominate the study of criminology, to the extent that a number of writers have referred to its purposeful exclusion of other approaches, in particular qualitative, inductive based knowledge (Carlen & Worrall, 1987; Naffine, 1997; Smart, 1977). With the exception of Lombroso and Ferrero, the first criminologists were not concerned with women's crime "in any serious way" (Naffine, 1997, p.18).

The development of the social sciences, following on from Durkheim and Weber, constructed a new formulation based on the application of scientific understandings to social structure. The "new" social science contributed a perspective about crime and criminality based on social constructions of crime and the influence of environmental factors in crime causation. This contrasted with Freud's psychoanalytical and deficit-based understanding of deviance.

The legacy of criminology as science has been not only the two major epistemological differences in perspectives between social and psychological origins of crime, but also an overriding emphasis on empirical science in the positivist tradition (Naffine, 1997). There is no doubt that empirical work is necessary in order for governments and societies to determine policy in regard to crime. However, history has shown that when empiricism is applied in an unreflective fashion that assumes universal understandings and application, it has ignored issues of gender and ethnicity (Gelsthorpe & Morris, 1990; Naffine, 1997). The application of statistical analysis on a macro scale allows us to discern possible trends in crime and characteristics of crime. It does not enable us to understand the experience of crime and how it impacts on individual lives and communities.

Feminist critiques have challenged the assumptions of traditional, rational, positivist explanations for crime because of their lack of recognition of gender and cultural difference (Carlen & Worrall, 1987; Gelsthorpe & Morris, 1990; Heidensohn, 1985; Smart, 1990). Given the significant disparity

between men's and women's offending, internationally, feminist writers have argued that to render women invisible is to ignore one of the most significant factors associated with crime (Heidensohn, 1985). Their argument is that perhaps by focussing on gender disparities in relation to notions of masculinity and femininity, we may obtain a better understanding of the factors that contribute to crime. Feminist research over the last three decades has significantly increased our knowledge about women and crime. However, much of the work has had to be reactionary in the sense that it has had to present a cogent antithesis to the prevailing paradigm in order to establish itself. It is arguable that research about women and crime is now at the stage of being able to direct its attention to the specific causes of women's crime, since the broad parameters of a feminist paradigm have been established (Dobash, Dobash, & Gutteridge, 1986; Heidensohn, 1985; Smart, 1977). As a consequence of the energy devoted to the development of an antithesis, many of the important questions about the aetiology of women's crime remain unanswered (Heidensohn, 1985). It is arguable that feminist criminology is a "contradiction in terms" as "Feminism seeks to deconstruct and liberate, while criminology seems inevitably to seek testable causes and feasible controls" (Worrall, 1990, p.vii). The uneasy tension, which these two philosophical purposes engender, besets feminist, criminological discourse. Nevertheless, researchers continue to make contributions to our understanding of women's crime while cognisant of the difficulties it presents.

Heidensohn, extrapolated and summarised four major characteristics of women's crime from three decades of research. These were:

Economic rationality

Heterogeneity of their offences

Fear and the impact of deviant stigma

The experience of double deviance and double jeopardy

(Heidensohn, 1985, p.17).

Each characteristic defies the innate and inherent assumptions about women's criminality prevalent in the past, and still supported today, in pathological explanations for criminal behaviour. The factors bear comparison with the sparse New Zealand research on the subject of women's crime. The next section of this review will consider the New Zealand research and theory-building context to see whether, and in what ways, New Zealand criminologists have begun to explore women's crime.

It is significant that ethnicity and the experience of cultural difference have rarely been selected in consideration of women's crime. In New Zealand, where Maori women constitute approximately 50 per cent of the inmate population (Prison Census, 1995, 1997, 1999), the question of ethnicity must be central to questions about women's crime. The question arises as to whether it can be assumed, as it may be in the deterministic tradition, that being Maori, in itself, involves a high risk of criminal involvement, and whether this is related to ethnicity or to other intersecting factors. A comment in a New Zealand Prisons Department report in 1960 made reference to the fact that "people with a proportion of Maori blood in their veins are much more prone to criminal behaviour" (AJHR, 1960, H-20). It is unlikely that such an example of institutional racism would be repeated in the contemporary context, although actuarial regimes risk promoting similar beliefs by defining and measuring Maori criminogenic factors that are based on ethnicity. The role of ethnicity in the causation of women's crime has not been explored in regard to New Zealand women. My own study sought to begin to explore the question of ethnicity, with the guidance of Maori women working in the field of criminal justice.

The majority of research about women offenders both internationally and in New Zealand has revealed a population with "dismal" employment histories, dependence on fixed incomes, and responsibility for dependants (see for example, in the UK, Carlen, 1988; Player & Jenkins, 1994; Heidensohn, 1985. In New Zealand, Braybrooke & O'Neill, 1988; O'Neill, 1989; Taylor, 1996). Prisoner accounts have recorded rational decisions to commit crime in order to meet economic need and social circumstance (Carlen, 1988). Much research has recounted the cycle of poverty, victimisation, substance abuse and crime in which women find themselves trapped with little opportunity to escape (Carlen, 1988 [UK]; Chesney-Lind, 1997 [US], Moth & Hudson, 1999 [NZ]). Given the fact that we imprison women experiencing poverty, the factor of poverty itself must provide an integral component in research about factors associated with crime causation, that is unless we are prepared to assert that the poor are innately more inclined to commit crime. At the same time, not all women who find themselves categorised in the lowest socio-economic percentile groupings commit crime, and this begs the question about why some women may resort to crime.

Women in the UK, Australia, and New Zealand commit fewer crimes than men, are less likely to reoffend and are rarely classed as professional criminals (Heidensohn, 1985; Quadrelli, 1997). While in New Zealand, women have increasingly figured in offences against the person (Taylor,

1996), victimless crime is still the predominant type of offence committed by women (Department of Corrections, 2000a).

Fear and the impact of deviant stigma are two factors associated with women's crime that have not been comprehensively explored in the New Zealand context. A number of researchers have referred indirectly to the effect of fear and stigma in association with other areas of study to do with women and crime. O'Neill's (1989) research referred to the experience of women in prison and their fear about the cost of their offending to their dependant children. Other research about mothers "inside" has pointed to similar distress and anxiety of women in prison in regard to their family commitments (Aikman, 1981; Barnao, 1996; Kingi, 1999; Saphira, 1981; Taylor, 1996). It can be construed from these accounts, that whilst the fear of losing their children and/or the impact on their families was not sufficient to stop women offending, it acted as a deterrent in terms of their future plans.

It is clear from the attitudes expressed about prominent cases involving women offenders, that the public hold strong views about their guilt and punishment and no doubt social service agencies, employers and the general public are influenced by such debates. How far this affects their treatment of and willingness to assist inmates after their release has not been studied. Agencies such as the New Zealand Prisoner's Aid and Rehabilitation Society (NZPARS), find difficulty in persuading prospective landlords and employers to accept ex-inmates (personal communication with the Manager, PAR, Canterbury Westland Branch).

Finally, *double deviance* and *double jeopardy* as discussed earlier appear to impact on the treatment of women's offending. While this is not the central concern of a study about factors related to re-offending, a link may exist if one considers that women may carry residual resentment about their treatment in the criminal justice process. That may, in turn, affect the criminality of women. The emphasis on benefit-fraud control in recent years resulted in the incarceration of a significant number of women who had no previous history of offending. It would appear that many such women spent their increased benefit on maintaining their family and meeting the needs of their children (Personal communication with Christchurch Community Corrections Officer, 1998). My own anecdotal experience, in working with women inmates in this category, was that the offending was seen by the mother as a necessary part of her domestic role, that of providing for her children. The fact that the majority of offenders sentenced for benefit fraud are single mothers may indicate not only discriminatory practice but also their lack of mobility and consequent vulnerability to

control and prosecution (Hughes, 1999). Dean and Melrose (1995), in a study based in the UK, concluded that benefit fraud is usually the result of economic necessity and is related to labour market policy (Dean & Melrose, 1995). Their argument is that where labour market policy is directed at reducing the perceived attractiveness of social security benefits, government policy is aimed at strengthening punitive, benefit control mechanisms. The indirect discrimination that flows on from benefit control in New Zealand is that the conjugal status criteria are applied almost solely to women and not to their male partners (Hughes, 1999).

Double deviance and *double jeopardy* have not been researched in the New Zealand context. The anecdotal evidence of women probation officers is that comments about the domestic sphere are routine in pre-sentence reports for women and commonly ignored in regard to men. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the ability to manage household affairs and to budget is more likely to be commented on in relation to women offenders (Personal communication with two women probation officers in Christchurch, July, 1998).

The outstanding questions that Heidensohn (1985) has alluded to, which deserve further attention in terms of women's crime, are useful starting points for taking the debate about the central role of gender in crime. Heidensohn referred to the need to explore women's own perceptions about themselves as "deviant" and to understand more about the "damage done by criminalising them" (Heidensohn: 1985, p.21). She goes on to urge that the "Wider queries remain to be tackled. The largest group of these undoubtedly concern aetiology: what causes the patterns of women's crime, why does it differ significantly from men's and how far and in what ways are these gender divisions linked to other crucial divisions of age, class and ethnicity?" (Heidensohn, 1985, p.21). The difficulty for feminist research in this area is the dichotomy referred to earlier. That is, mainstream criminological discourse is primarily unquestioning of the goals of prevailing political solutions to crime. Its research is likely to be reductionist, utilitarian and heavily influenced by what are perceived to be acceptable areas for research in current political and funding climates. The focus of much mainstream discourse is on managing inmates more efficiently with increased technology within existing controlling frameworks. It is not concerned whether current theoretical approaches and methodologies are relevant to women. Since much feminist historical discourse has revealed the pervasive influence of women's social place in the treatment of women's crime and of women offenders, feminist criminology questions the foundation of much current research.

The next section of this chapter will introduce the concept of re-offending or recidivism and the major theories about, and approaches to, the treatment of re-offending. Recent revision of predominant crime theories will be traversed in the light of the developing feminist, criminological paradigm.

4.2 Theories of Re-offending

Whilst there has been an increased interest in research and writing about women offenders, there has been little written about women's re-offending (Chesney-Lind, 1997; Gelsthorpe & Morris, 1990; Naffine, 1997; Palmer, 1994). The criteria that determine re-offending are usually accepted to be offences recorded as committed after a period of imprisonment. It can be seen that there are problems inherent in such arbitrary criteria given that official measures of re-offending may not reflect the reality of women's lives. Current measures of re-offending are unable to reflect a process of personal change which may involve relapse at some point, which is measured, and other areas of positive change that are not. Some researchers, including the writer, prefer to use a combination of both official and self-report data in order to assess re-offending.

The predominant western response to re-offending is re-incarceration. Once having acquired the "recidivist" label, women risk heavier tariffs when coming before the courts despite changes they may have made. Having responded to re-offending with re-imprisonment, prison systems are then required to fulfil the rehabilitative purpose of utilitarian forms of punishment. The public and the judicial system have an expectation that various programmes and services will be provided to prisoners that address their continuing offending. Caution is advisable in regard to what might be considered to be part of the "rehabilitative" function of a prison. Historically, the predominant approach to offender rehabilitation in New Zealand and elsewhere has been investment in employment and training opportunities (Pratt, 1992). These still play a major part in regimes in both custodial and community-based settings. Emphasis on both domains has arisen *ipso facto* from the belief that lack of employment opportunity contributed/contributes to offending. The belief that employment would reduce recidivism became tempered from the 1960s onwards with the belief that education was also an important factor in rehabilitation, although education for women in New Zealand prisons developed more slowly (Taylor, 1996). The growth of psychology and other social science disciplines led to the introduction of psychological counselling and the employment of

psychologists in many New Zealand prisons for individual case work when psychological change was perceived as a key issue in addressing offending.

Support for offenders in the community, after release from prison, has been funded directly by Government, although this has been a more recent development. The early Prison Gate Missions and Prisoners' Aid Societies which fulfilled this role were entirely voluntary to begin with (History of New Zealand Prisoners' Aid Society, 1990). The former, were funded through religious organisations such as the Salvation Army and the latter, by community-based committees. In the 1990s the Prison Gate Missions have been superseded by interdenominational involvement of churches in prison welfare work. Prisoners' Aid and Rehabilitation Societies have since become funded mainly through direct funds transfer from central government while they have maintained some local charitable funding input (Canterbury/Westland PARS, Annual Report, 1998/9). Other community organisations such as PILLARS, also receive Government funding and they too provide support to released prisoners although their priority is to support prisoners' families for the duration of a prison sentence (PILLARS, 1997). The traditional function of charitable organisations of offering practical aid and grants of money to prisoners at the prison gate, has been supplanted by the Department of Work and Income's Steps to Freedom Grant. This Grant will be considered in greater detail in a later social services section.

The other traditional form of direct state support to prisoners on release has been through the Probation service and its role has served the dual purpose of supervision and support. Some would argue that recent changes to Probation practice emphasise its control function to the detriment of its traditional rehabilitative role (Fulton & Stone, 1992; Turner, Petersilia, & Deschenes, 1992).

A primary concern of this study is the range of support and interventions available to women offenders after release from prison, which may protect them from further offending. Whilst it may seem only relevant to consider community-based services, current mainstream research about offending and what factors exercise cause and effect on offending behaviour, has evolved out of consideration of both institutional and community-based settings. Contemporary policy makers in criminal justice are affected by prevailing research trends as successive Post Election Briefing Papers by the Ministry of Justice to incoming governments show (Ministry of Justice, 1996 and 1999). In the 1996 Briefing Paper in the chapter entitled "Criminal Justice System and Responses to Crime", reference is made to rehabilitation and increased knowledge about "effectiveness" of

rehabilitative programmes. It is suggested that “successful reintegration of offenders into their communities” will be most likely by targeting effective interventions at “persistent serious offenders and those who can benefit most from them”, (Ministry of Justice, 1996, p.83). Clearly, criminological research can and does have significant impact on policy and consequently on the funding which may be directed towards released offenders. The subject population of this study is released women offenders and, therefore, it is important to traverse the policy implications for this particular group. Already we have seen that, according to the Ministry of Justice, the focus should be on more serious offenders. This means that women offenders who tend to commit less serious offences overall may be overlooked in programme provision.

Reference is made throughout Departmental policy statements to overseas research and its usefulness to New Zealand. Policy and theory are also affected by changing political imperatives and the Labour/Alliance coalition elected in 1999 established a new set of priorities addressing re-offending (Department of Corrections, 2001) with a strong focus on youth offending. The question remains as to what particular theories and research about recidivism have been imported into New Zealand, and how applicable overseas recidivism research is to New Zealand’s unique form of colonial development and its diverse cultural heritage. The additional key question in relation to this study is the relevance of overseas research to women in the criminal justice system in New Zealand.

4.3 Theories of crime causation

Predictive research in regard to crime is based on the different theoretical perspectives and opinions that individual researchers subscribe to. We have seen from earlier discussion that the fundamental split between exogenous and endogenous perspectives of human behaviour occurred during the first half of the 20th century. Criminological discourse has inherited the legacy of the split between psychological and sociological disciplines. In terms of crime causation, there has been an ongoing strand of research and theory building within the field of psychology. This research has focussed on the individual, arguing that population-based statistical analyses “are a poor guide when managing risk in the individual” (Maden, 1997, p.243). Theorists from this stance argue that “most female offending is due to mental disorder” (Maden, 1997, p.245). Feminist criminologists and criminologists from a sociological perspective argue that this perspective is unable to account for the contextual issues of class, gender and ethnicity (Carlen, 1988; Chesney-Lind, 1997; Naffine, 1997).

It is also unable to explain why particular social groups are more strongly represented in prison populations.

Historically, the sociological and psychological perspectives have dominated theory building and research at different times, with the sociological perspective in ascendancy during the 1960s and 70s (Pratt, 1995). Psychological perspectives have dominated the field of criminology in recent years (Gendreau, 1996; Pratt, 1995). Psychology has served the attractive political purpose of attempting to predict individual criminal behaviour. Governments understandably need to reassure the public that adequate measures are being taken to control serious crime. A perusal of daily newspapers reveals western society's preoccupation with violent crime and criminals and the plight of victims. The pressure experienced in the political process is to demonstrate effectiveness in controlling crime. Predictive research has become dominated by advancing technologies that will predict risk of individuals re-offending and offers criminal justice administrators the means to assess, to classify and to control accordingly (see Walters, 1991, 1995, 1997). Some commentators have argued that the broad application of a limited range of actuarial risk criteria to a broader section of the offender population has unjustifiably increased the degree of control (Pratt, 1995). Psychological risk and predictive criteria are individually deficit-based and are unable to account for issues of class, gender and ethnicity.

Sociological theories are concerned more with the group characteristics of offender populations. Sociology seeks answers to questions about why the majority of inmates in New Zealand prisons come from the lowest socio-economic sectors of the community. It questions the patterns and trends in offending statistics in terms of what they reveal about groups of offenders. Three main theories have been developed in the sociological tradition in order to explain criminal offending and these will be discussed next.

4.3.1 *Strain Theory*

Building on Durkheim's theory of anomie, Merton's early *strain theory* posited that those groups in society that are excluded from achieving conformist goals may resort to illegitimate methods of achieving these (Merton, 1957). The theory was based on the accepted traditional, patriarchal, and conformist goals for men, in the areas of employment and material wealth. Its weakness was its lack of application to women, who, it could be argued, did not necessarily share similar goals. It would

be hard to conceive of ways in which women may achieve the goals of full-time parenthood illegitimately, or in a way which breached criminal codes. However, with more women participating in employment, it could be argued that they too experience equivalent alienation from shared societal goals.

Revised strain theory (Agnew, 1992; Broidy & Agnew, 1997) has built on Merton's (1957) and Cohen's (1955) classic strain theory and provides a broader basis on which to apply the theory. Rather than focus on a narrow range of pressures restricted to monetary success and middle class goals, Agnew argues that strain needs to recognise a number of potential sources. This allows the theory to be applied to women who may have different sources of economic and status strain in their lives, not necessarily those associated with male motivation. Strain theory can account for a variety of oppressions in terms of stress where gender oppression can readily be understood in relation to women's relative experience of status and goal achievement. Agnew also argues that cognitive, behavioural, and emotional factors may be involved in adaptation to strain and that involvement in crime may comprise one form of adaptation (1992). Likewise, women may experience qualitatively different cognitive, behavioural and emotional factors in their response to strain.

Cultural deviance theory emerged as an adjunct to strain theory and it included consideration of the effects of the group or gang on criminal behaviour in urban communities (Smith, 1995, p.34). Organised criminal subcultures, such as the *Mongrel Mob* in New Zealand, are widely perceived by the police and the general public as exerting conforming pressure on individuals.²⁵ There is a widely held perception that some gangs in New Zealand maintain a high level of criminal activity. The role of women in gang structures is less understood, although the degree of influence gangs exert over women is frequently referred to in Probation pre-sentence reports. Certainly, gang involvement and involvement in drug subcultures are two factors relevant in the New Zealand context and an important consideration for criminological research.

4.3.2 *Control Theory*

Control theory is another example of a traditional criminological perspective that was developed and initially applied to men (Hirschi, 1969). This theory, in emphasising the individual's attachment to

²⁵ The Christchurch Press featured an article on the 7th July on the Mongrel Mob influence on young people in the Shirley community, a suburb of Christchurch.

conventional society, relied on a masculine interpretation of conventional behaviour. The wide range of research about the strength and quality of offenders' family relationships supports this theory (Chaiklin, 1972; Glaser, 1964). More recent research based on control theory has suggested a link between reduction in re-conviction rates for men and strong family ties (Hairston, 1991; Schafer, 1994). However, the theory fails to account for social class, ethnicity and relative power imbalance, including gender disparities. It is likely, though this has not been vigorously explored to my knowledge, that women experience qualitatively different kinds of emotional attachment and that these may impact on offending. Given that a high proportion of women in New Zealand prisons are responsible for dependant children, it is reasonable to expect that that attachment may influence important life decisions (Taylor 1996). The difficulty with the application of classic control theory to women is its inability to account for the impact of gender on conventional relationships.

In recent years, control theory has been revised and adapted so that it can better explain women's involvement with crime by the inclusion of power as a central consideration of the theory. Consideration of power allows for an understanding of the differential power exercised by men and women in conventional relations and its differential effect. *Revised power and control theory* argue that girls and women experience patriarchy in their domestic and public relationships, and that this exercises a controlling effect on their behaviour. This theory goes some way to explaining why there is such a marked disparity between male and female crime. It argues that adolescents have a different perception of risk-taking behaviour that is embedded in the gendered perceptions of potential sanctions and the differential impact of societal sanctions (Blackwell, 2000).

Both revised strain theory and power and control theory have much to offer in explanations of women's crime. In common with conventional sociological explanations of crime, they rely on macro-social variables in order to explain trends and relationships. Whilst these are important considerations in terms of their impact on women as a whole, or significant groups of women, they are less able to explain the complex, individual, lived experience of women who are caught up in the offending, imprisonment cycle. They do not, for example, account for addiction with its physiological and psychological impact on behaviour, and how this may affect women's crime.

4.3.3 Psychological Theories

Psychological theories of crime causation focus on latent traits and internal propensity to commit crime and to re-offend (O'Connell, 2003, Louth, Hare & Linden, 1998). Unlike sociological theories which stress external factors that direct an individual towards crime, psychological theories emphasise biological and personality traits that mean that an individual is inevitably involved with crime in the first place and persists with criminal behaviour (Hollin, 1992). Inherent, biological traits associated with criminality are supported by twin studies in psychology and studies based on adoption (Mednick, Gabrielli & Hutchings, 1984). These have been challenged on the basis of intervening variables related to the impact of environmental factors (Hollin, 1992). Related to research concerning biological traits is research on female offender psychopathy, which has focussed on inherent personality indicators, and psychopathy measures are routinely employed in correctional settings (Edens, Hart, Johnson & Johnson, & Olver, 2000).

Psychodynamic perspectives in psychology have contributed a Freudian derived understanding of criminality based on personality development. Freudian psychology proposes that weak internal controls exist where individuals have failed to develop adequate ego and superego as a result of parental influences, and weak control is associated with criminal behaviour. Clearly, much later research owes its origins to similar understandings of individual propensity to commit crime based on personality development (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990).

Social learning theory, based on behaviourist understandings of human development, has explored the influence of environmental factors on criminality. The theory of *differential association* while developed with a strong sociological emphasis by Sutherland and Cressy (1970) on the basis that conceptions of crime are socially constructed in the first instance, also proposed that differential association defined offenders from non-offenders. According to social learning theory, "crucial learning takes place through associations within intimate social groups and relationships" (Hollin, 1992, p.53) and in relation to criminality this means associating not just with offenders but with people who are "favourably disposed towards crime" (Hollin, 1992, p.53).

An amalgam of sociological and individualistic theories has been influential in psychological theory development in criminology. Hollin (1992) referred to the failure of psychologists to take a multidisciplinary approach that in his view would have led to "more complete understanding of

criminal behaviour” (p.90). More recently psychologists have increasingly recognised the impact of external factors and debate has arisen about the degree of emphasis to be placed on endogenous as opposed to exogenous factors in explaining crime, and which particular factors may be associated with it. Building on social control theory, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) proposed a *general theory of crime* that involved early environmental factors impacting on families and children that were understood to lead to the development of latent traits in children that contributed to criminal behaviour. They particularly found impulsivity to be associated with crime, and found that once this trait was developed it remained constant in adult career criminals.

Gottfredson & Hirschi’s conception of criminal propensity has been challenged and further developed by Sampson & Laub (1995) who placed criminal behaviour in the context of the life course. They proposed that entry into offending required a different conceptualisation and understanding from persistent offending. This related to their discovery of two major groups of offenders, those who displayed high levels of criminal propensity but who did not go on to become criminals, and a much smaller group who became persistent offenders. This led them to question what other factors might be associated with offending given the small numbers who went on to become career criminals. Sampson & Laub found that despite criminal propensities “informal social bonds in adulthood to family and employment explain changes in criminality over the life span” (Sampson & Laub, 1995, p.7). They conceived the notions of life course trajectories and life course transitions, the former referred to long term patterns of development while the latter referred to abrupt events that can interrupt trajectories. Both trajectories and transitions may impact on offending in either risk or protective fashion. In their research with male offenders, attachment to a spouse and/or employer acted as protective factors.

Unlike cross-sectional studies, developmental theories have the potential to explain the age and crime relationship, changes in types of offending across the life course, the difference between persistent and temporary offenders, precursors to offending, and the personal consequences of offending (Thornberry, 1997). All of these attributes of offending rely on a longitudinal appreciation of the impact of offending across the life course.

In recent years, recognising the potential for greater understanding of criminality through combinations of perspectives and theories, there has been a growth of multi-theoretical approaches, many but not all of which, have sought to combine developmental theory with strain, social control

and differential association theories among others (Brannigan, 1997; Paternoster & Brame, 1997; Hagan & Foster, 2003; Hoffman, 2003; Peter, LaGrange & Silverman, 2003; O'Connell, 2003). The future of theory development in this area appears to be towards developing an integrated approach to crime that allows for a more complex multi-dimensional understanding to emerge from cross-theoretical traditions.

Biological, psychological and environmental factors have been integrated in *diathesis-stress theory* which puts forward the proposition that individuals are predisposed toward disease (the diathesis) but that environmental, life disturbances (the stress) precipitate the illness (Davison, Neale & Kring, 2004). Diathesis-stress theory began to be developed during the 1960s in relation to schizophrenia and understanding the role of psychopathology as opposed to life stressors (Meehl, 1962, & Bleuler, 1963 cited in Monroe & Simons, 1991). Possessing the predisposition for a particular disease by no means determines that an individual will proceed to develop the illness rather the intervening stressors determine its development. In recent years, loss of social support has been linked in this model to the development of depressive symptoms (Monroe & Simons, 1991), and depressive symptoms in turn have been linked to substance dependency (Brook, 2003; Skinstad & Swain, 2001). The diathesis-stress paradigm is integrative in the sense that diverse sources of information are encompassed to explain the cause of diathesis. This theory may well have particular application to the significant numbers of female offenders in New Zealand who are described as having substance dependency problems (Moth & Hudson, 1999). To date, the intersection between offending, substance dependency and depression has not been explored within this paradigm.

As a consequence of the wide range of explanatory theories in criminology there are a wide range of potential factors that have been associated with re-offending. The factors reflect the application of specific theories. Research in criminology can be perceived as an ongoing process of thesis and antithesis with praxis as the mediating factor. It is field research and the practice of those who work in the criminal justice field that both test the hypotheses about re-offending and add new dimensions to theory construction.

4.4 Factors associated with re-offending from research

4.4.1 *Introduction*

Much of the research about factors associated with re-offending has focussed on prediction. There is considerable attraction in adopting research which will enable correctional administrators to manage offenders in a manner that reduces potential risk both to the community and to decision-makers. Crime prediction theoretically assures the community of some protection in that measures may be put in place to further control and supervise, those viewed as “at risk”. In climates of fiscal restraint, an additional powerful attraction lies in the potential targeting of specific groups, facilitated by sophisticated technologies of assessment.

Studies concerning prediction of criminal behaviour have originated from different social science disciplines for different purposes. They have resulted in the identification of differing sets of factors, which have been applied largely to male offenders. These factors have been applied to a population if they have been deemed to arise from structural factors, or to individuals if they have been deemed to have psychological origins (Smith, 1995). The notion of predictability has more neutral connotations than “risk”. The definition of risk is the “possibility of meeting danger or suffering harm or loss” (Oxford Dictionary, 1994). The notion of risk has the potential to engender fear and it is interesting to note that this is the commonly used term in reference to predictive research. Predictability does not imply individual behaviour alone and semantically it can and it has encompassed a range of factors and motivations.

In the field of prediction research, two main fields of research have developed. The first is that which is concerned with static factors associated with re-offending. These are factors that are historical and not subject to alteration, such as age at first conviction. The second is dynamic factors which have come to be categorised as needs; criminogenic needs are those that are subject to change such as substance abuse, or financial needs. Prediction research may involve both kinds of factors. A selection of factors most commonly associated with men’s re-offending and where available, women’s re-offending, will now be considered.

The influence of age at the time of first offending has been a factor commonly associated with male re-offending (Farrington, 1986; Farrington, Ohlin & Wilson., 1986; Smith, 1995). Other research

has shown that criminal offending is likely to start long before first arrest (Loeber et al., 1989 cited in Corbett & Petersilia, 1994, p.52). Still others have shown that the more antisocial the child, the greater the chance of early arrest (Patterson et al., 1992 cited in Corbett & Petersilia, 1994, p.52). Unfortunately, we do not yet know whether these findings can be applied to women. It may be conjectured that, having found these factors to be significant where boys are concerned, it is possible that girls from the same environment experience similar influences. On the other hand, the disparities in offending and population, and disparities in status between men and women, may indicate that other major forces affect women's re-offending.

In 1995 and 1999, the majority of women in prison in New Zealand were in the 25-49 year age group (Ministry of Justice, 1995, Department of Corrections, 2000a). Statistics such as these reveal little about re-offending and whether higher rates of recidivism occur in younger age groups of women offenders. The comparatively small numbers of women in New Zealand prisons at any one time also makes it difficult to draw statistical conclusions.

Among other factors that have been found to be associated with criminal offending are individual, family, school and peer factors. Certain individual behaviours such as impulsivity and hyperactivity have been related to early onset of offending (Loeber & LeBlanc, 1990). Invariably, the family characteristics identified are dysfunctional in the sense that they allude to parental deviance, poor family functioning and child-rearing practices, where offenders have experienced different forms of familial neglect and abuse. Offenders are commonly considered to have come from deprived backgrounds with "low family income, low social class, poor housing, large family size, physical neglect" (Corbett & Petersilia, 1994, p.51).

Some studies will acknowledge that families are part of a wider socio-structural context and point to the effects of serious socio-economic disadvantage (Larzelere & Patterson., 1990). Parental stress, fewer resources, and limited social skills, have been identified as some of the factors contributing to early offending by children. The extent to which consideration is given to socio-economic issues and moral and social justice concerns depends on the perspective of the writer.

The extent of influence which peers exert in offending is less clear. There are consistent findings that association with peers who are offending influences greater criminality, but there is conflict about whether this is due to peer pressure or the fact that "similar kids are mixing together" (Corbett

& Petersilia, 1994, p.53). Association is widely regarded as a risk factor in many criminal justice regimes and indeed is provided for in legislation that prohibits offenders' association in particular circumstances. Some criminal jurisdictions take a comprehensive approach to non-association orders and there has been debate in New Zealand about the strengthening of non-association provisions (Harris v R, 1998). It is widely accepted that contact with other offenders may contaminate individuals after release from prison and New Zealand Prison Parole Boards routinely apply non-association conditions. Contamination after release from prison is different from peer pressure associated with adolescence, in that imprisonment itself may increase the likelihood of widening criminal contacts, but the principle of mutual influence remains the same.

4.4.2 *Institution-based modes of classification and risk assessment*

Psychological prediction research has been dominated in recent years by concern with violent male offenders and the potential harm they present to the community. There is no doubt that some violent offenders constitute a risk to the community at large, but how far systems that have been developed with this particular group should be applied to the majority of non-violent offenders remains to be seen. Assessment and prediction instruments may theoretically predict a higher level of likely re-offending, based on the selected characteristics measured, than is represented by the actual offence committed by the offender. In other words, it is possible that an offender who is imprisoned on a non-violent offence is categorised and classified as high risk according to other historical predictors. The "three strikes and you're out" sentencing policy is an example of such an approach.

In Clements' review of two decades of classification research he refers to the "multiple objectives" of classification, which it is hoped will lead to "improved prediction, responsive treatment assignment, more effective institutional and community-based supervision and better long range planning" (Clements, 1996, p.122). All such goals can be regarded as managerial in the sense that at no time is the level of economic and educational disadvantage of offenders referred to. The emphasis in the classification exercise is placed on endogenous as opposed to exogenous factors. It is assumed that a group will require treatment but it is unclear whether this applies to all offenders or to a few. Clements goes on to say that according to recent intervention research, treatment should be directed at a high risk few. In other words, the objectives of some classification research ignore the majority of offenders who do not fit a few selected categories.

Clements refers to a wide range of psychometric techniques currently used to measure risk of re-offending. Measurement instruments can be used for risk assessment in order to produce profiles and others may “consider offender needs as distinct from risk assessment in order to produce profiles that lead to differential treatment” (Clements, 1996, p.122). The MMPI or Megargee Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (1979), which measures personality-base predictors has influenced the development of later assessment systems. Others, such as AIMS or Internal Management System (Quay, 1984, cited in Clements, 1996), measures current and past behavioural histories. The Prisoner Case Management system (Austin et al., 1989 cited in Clements, 1996) based on the Wisconsin model, used structural interviews and detailed scoring guides to place offenders into one of five treatment/management strategies.

In Canada, Bonta and Motiuk (1985) reported on the development of the LSI or Level of Supervision Inventory, which was an interview-based multipurpose assessment instrument. The LSI addresses criminal history, education/employment, marital/family, companions, drugs/alcohol, emotional/personality and attitudinal factors. When tested in institutions, this method has been shown to reduce security over-classifications. The LSI has also proved superior to the MMPI in predicting half-way house outcome and post-programme incarceration (Clements, 1996, p.129). The LSI administers both risk assessment and needs assessment and is similar to assessment instruments used by the Community Probation Division in New Zealand up until mid-2001 (Appendix 2a and 2b).

Once institutions and government agencies adapt and implement first-order assessment instruments they are likely to become primarily actuarial, tick-box systems which can be administered by line staff. Prison systems are likely to use “salient factors, such as crime severity” with a “basic approach which assigns risk points based on criminal history, offence status, prior assaultive or escape behaviour, and other prison adjustment measures” (Clements, 1996, p.127). Hitherto, risk instruments have been applied across gender and ethnicity in the New Zealand context.

Second-order measurements of risk, which are generally more complex and more costly in terms of professional expertise, have been developed by penal psychologists to be administered by psychologists. In New Zealand, the RAI or Risk Assessment Instrument has been developed by Psychological Services, Department of Corrections primarily to assist Parole Board decision-

making. The RAI includes the actuarial risk factors of first-order assessment and applies further psychometric testing based on behavioural models.

Van Voorhis (1994) has advocated psychologically-based measurement systems should be concerned with treatment outcomes rather than security or disciplinary measures. However, such systems readily lend themselves to increased surveillance. The RAI can be used as a control tool in that theoretically an offender can be classified into high-risk categories which determine release will be either considerably delayed or not considered at all. Whether the degree of assessed risk adequately takes into account the progress of the offender in prison, following participation in various interventions, depends to a large extent on the weighting given to dynamic factors. During 1998, as the Christchurch Women's Prison social worker, I made representations to the national Parole Board on behalf of a woman, a life-sentencee. The representations challenged the application of the RAI risk factors to women without adequate research about co-gender applicability, and the lack of weighting accorded dynamic factors. In this instance, the life sentencee was granted parole release although it is not possible to ascertain from the Parole Board report as to how much weight was given by the Board to the various submissions made.

There has been insufficient development of instruments to investigate the assignment and efficacy of treatments as this has "lagged behind" risk assessment (Clements, 1996, p.122). It is possible that treatment has lagged behind because once offenders' needs and risks have been categorised there is an implied responsibility to address re-offending, unless it is assumed that control measures in themselves will reduce re-offending. Categorising needs has considerable resource implications, and so measuring systems have been captured by penal systems avid for more methods of efficient control and unable and unwilling to devote funds to treatment programmes. Among the most extreme examples of this approach is the State of Georgia in the US, where privatisation of prisons, and selective use of criminological research, has led to an emphasis on prison industries. This has been brought about by the sacking of more than "200 teachers, counsellors and librarians" so that prisoners will not be distracted by rehabilitation and education programmes (Pilger, 1998, p.71).

Despite the emphasis on control, many researchers have urged prisons to classify according to offender needs as well as risk (Palmer, 1992, 1994). It is more likely however, that the sheer pressure of increasing prison musters and probation numbers will determine a "highly utilitarian" focus on the distribution of prison and community-based resources (Clements, 1996, p.124).

4.4.3 Needs linked to re-offending

Whereas factors assessed in order to measure risk are arguably driven by control imperatives and measure static variables, needs assessment provides the theoretical link to rehabilitation interventions. A number of writers have indicated that many correctional systems are abandoning needs assessment functions in order to pursue management goals (Cullen & Gilbert, 1982; Toch, 1995).

The term “criminogenic needs”, has come to be associated with criminological research from a psychological perspective emanating from Canada and the United States. These needs are those that have been associated with offending and are subject to change (Gendreau, 1996). The rationale for attending to criminogenic needs is that the person who has a substance abuse problem, but who does not resort to illegal means to finance her/his dependency, has a need, but it is not criminogenic. This rationale assumes that the person with a severe addiction is always successful at funding the dependency in this way. Another potential position may be that it is the substance dependency that constitutes a potential risk, and that unless this is attended to there is potential for a person to resort to criminal means.

Nevertheless, the approach to needs of inmates in New Zealand requires these to be linked to criminality (Department of Corrections, Community Probation Service, 2000). The selection of what constitutes *criminogenic needs* is subject to international debate. The predominance of a psychological perspective has meant that criminogenic needs are primarily endogenous. They are comprised of domains that individuals may change such as employment, marital/family, associates/social interaction, substance abuse, community functioning, personal/emotional orientation and attitude (Gendreau, 1996).

The domains are not related to environmental factors but are restricted to individual responses to the factors. This means for example, that the labour market environment in regard to employment, and the social policy environment in regard to access to social services and income support, are entirely absent from the research.

Some writers acknowledge that “not all needs are criminogenic” (Andrews et al., 1990 cited in Clements, 1996, p.133). Other researchers have shown that post-prison failure is associated with

other factors besides individual behaviours and these include environmental deprivation. The LSI has been shown to overlap the Environmental Deprivation Scale (EDS) but this has not been explored (Clements, 1996, p.133). There is a possibility therefore, that programmes and treatment are less significant in terms of post-prison failure than environmental deprivation.

Clements has expressed the view that despite the potential of correctional classification “outer limits should be recognised. Correctional environments, whether institutional, community or post-release aftercare, do much to elicit, model or reinforce the kinds of offender behaviour that classification seeks to predict” (1996, p.139). Current assessment tools do not measure the influence of these environments. The implication of Clements’ statement is that non-programmatic factors are potentially decisive and determining factors in relation to offending. There is a paucity of research that has sought to describe the effects of offender environments and how these interact with assessed historic risk factors and assessed “criminogenic” needs, and whether there are other dynamic factors involved in the process of re-offending.

4.4.4 Dynamic factors in prediction research

There have been few studies which have considered dynamic factors in relation to predictive research and fewer which have considered offender environments in terms of their effect on re-offending. Zamble and Quinsey (1997) are among the few who have sought to examine more closely the actual events leading to re-offending, rather than the historical, actuarial, and static factors thought to be implicated in re-offending. Unlike both the prevailing risk and needs assessment approaches, they are of the view that the historical considerations provide only part of the total picture of re-offending and that actuarial methods do not consider the how and why of future criminal activity.

They describe the paucity of well-designed, evaluative studies, which may assist correctional workers in assessing and guiding offender change. The implications of their research are that defining problems, and likely problems, goes part of the way to addressing re-offending. They emphasise the need to seek solutions to the kinds of problems encountered by released inmates and their community-based workers.

Zamble and Quinsey were concerned with the combination of factors which may be present at the time of committing an offence. Their particular interest was with the cognitive and behavioural processes which occur, leading up to, and immediately preceding, an offence. They refer to the “contemporaneous determinants” of offending and the responses an offender makes from within (personal characteristics) to external environmental factors (Zamble & Quinsey, 1997, p.5). Both authors come from a psychological perspective and therefore focus more on the micro-personal, dynamic, psychological variables which may be at play at the time of committing an offence. The use of *coping theory* and *relapse prevention theory* are two of the models which they used in order to explain the way that individual offenders meet their particular environments. Both theories focus on individual coping mechanisms and on the ability to apply relapse prevention skills to problems encountered by offenders. The usefulness of the relapse model lay in its “focus on the factors responsible for maintenance of behavioural change” (Zamble & Quinsey, 1997, p.11).

Coping skills, when applied to relapse prevention, meant the ability to avoid high-risk situations and/or events which may lead to addictive behaviour. In the case of offending, recidivism was viewed as a “relapse process in which the offender falls back into habitual behaviour patterns” (Zamble & Quinsey, 1997, p.13). Given the writers’ perspectives, their primary interest became the individual’s particular coping responses, not the factors in the environment that may have led to such responses.

The subjects of the Zamble and Quinsey study were men recently returned to prison and a range of data sources was obtained for each individual. The most important source of information was a structured interview and a range of self-report questionnaires designed to measure particular psychological factors found to be significant in male, offender populations, although their significance in terms of re-offending is still unknown. The questions were based on the *Level of Supervision Inventory-Revised*, although this instrument required adjusting for the particular offender population selected for the study. The focus on the time sequence leading up to the actual offence was measured by a time-line to show significant ordered events. Subjects were asked to order seriousness of problems they experienced in order to achieve some sense of hierarchy in terms of causative events. This measure was unable to detect combinations of interrelated problems which may have influenced re-offending.

The qualitative questions were later categorised in order to allow statistical analysis. Questioning was planned in progressive fashion from open-ended to greater specificity and categorisation was done after the answers had been given, in order not to constrain the participants. While the information was retrospective, in that the men were asked to recall events prior to their most recent arrest, the authors found this did not create a problem in terms of accuracy of recall. Concerns about subjects minimising their offending were overcome by only interviewing those inmates who had admitted to their offences. Among the additional measures administered were the *Beck Depression Inventory* self-report scale; the *Spielberger State Anxiety Scale*; alcohol and drug dependency measures, and an anger management scale. Five additional coping factors were included based on the previous experience of the authors. These were: “a disagreement with a spouse over housework; pressure from a supervisor to work harder; running out of money; an invitation to a party on a work night; loneliness and social isolation after being released from prison” (Zamble & Quinsey, 1997, p.27). It is interesting to note the gendered nature of some of the additional coping factors and to consider whether similar coping factors would be likely to arise for women.

A further 16 questions were developed in order to measure criminal association, given the extent to which such association is implicated in re-offending. These questions also measured social isolation, referred to previously by the authors, as influential in terms of their previous research experience with offenders.

The study demonstrated what appeared to be “strong links between poor coping skills, dysphoric emotional states, certain perceptions and cognitions, and criminal recidivism” (Zamble & Quinsey, 1997, p.139). While the authors acknowledged that release from prison and reintegration was a difficult process for the majority of the group, they emphasised the individual’s capacity of meeting such difficulties. While adjustment, social reintegration and establishing a new lawful identity was acknowledged as problematic, many “recidivists engendered at least some of their own difficulties” (Zamble & Quinsey, 1997, p.68). Whilst it was stated that finding employment was difficult given recessionary conditions, the particular inadequacies and inappropriate behaviours of the subjects were perceived to be equally important. The longer a criminal history, the worse the potential prognosis for adjustment on release appeared to be, given the entrenched patterns of criminal behaviour.

The model for recidivism developed by the authors involved a set of interrelationships between exogenous and endogenous factors with the emphasis on the individual's coping response to external factors. Little attention was paid to the combination of pressures experienced by the releasees although this was acknowledged as problematic. The analysis of contemporaneous events surrounding an offence led to the conclusion that a "definable series of emotional and cognitive events occurs antecedent to new offences" (Zamble & Quinsey, 1997, p.145). It was not possible to discern a "single determinative" (Zamble & Quinsey, 1997, p.145) path as individual characteristics and external environments presented a unique combination of factors in each case. Despite the major individual differences, the writers believed that through objective observation they were able to predict offending and, most successfully, violent personal offending.

Particular changes in the offender's environment were seen to impact on recidivism. Among such changes were the possible effects of rehabilitative programmes, targeting specific behaviours. The relative influence of the presence or absence of such programmes was not explored as part of the study, apart from supervision. Supervision, it was found, had little effect on probationers; they almost universally violated the conditions placed on them. The authors allowed that without a control group, the relative efficacy of supervision was difficult to assess. However, they regarded the findings of the study as useful for probation officers with the knowledge gained about the effects of mood measurement and cognition prior to offending taking place. They recommended a problem-solving approach in working with offenders by assisting with managing mundane events and problems as they arise, before they escalated, by monitoring emotional reactions to problems. They also recommended ongoing measurement of psychological states in order to monitor responses which may precede offending.

More intrusive psychological monitoring of offenders has inherent cost and control consequences. Whether these are realistic in today's fiscally sensitive environment is doubtful, unless there is strong evidence that reduction in offending will result from introducing more sophisticated measures. Zamble and Quinsey compare financial bankruptcy, and the intensive controls of the state, to moral bankruptcy and the justification for intensive control of offenders. This raises social justice concerns in terms of how far the state is capable of monitoring offenders in a supportive fashion, or simply as a negative control measure leading to higher rates of imprisonment. There is a considerable distance between social research and policy implementation, and by the time research findings are implemented many resource and training factors have had their effect. Introducing

surveillance methods which are based solely on the likelihood of re-offending has major criminal justice implications.

The implications for women are twofold in that while Zamble and Quinsey justify intensive psychological monitoring on the basis of predicting violent male offending, it is customary for major policy shifts to be applied to women as well as men. Policy has been implemented, regardless of the nature of women's offending and regardless of whether a new approach is successful with women offenders.

The Zamble and Quinsey study has made a major contribution to understanding the processes of recidivism. It has shown that reliance on historical data is not sufficient in prediction research and that other dynamic variables are also influential. It has not tested the coping/relapse approach with women offenders, nor has it considered the impact of culture and ethnicity. Furthermore, the particular factors applied to the men in the study demonstrated an implicit gender bias, without acknowledging its gendered nature. If arguments over housework were a stress factor on release, then it is possible that some gender/role education may be worthwhile in prison programmes. Whilst the study accepted the influence of external factors and urged probation officers to concern themselves with immediate problems, there was little analysis of the effects of economic factors on re-offending, nor on the ability of probation officers to assist with problems outside their sphere of influence.

In summary, prevailing approaches to prediction research and recidivism of men emphasise the actuarial measurement of historical deficits found to be characteristic of some offender populations. Dynamic factors and the measurement of individual change in response to external influences are less well researched. Economic constraints and the influence of economic factors on recidivism have rarely been considered. The emphasis on individual deficits and research with prison populations means that ex-prisoners who have succeeded have largely been ignored, because the group that succeeds despite the difficulties has not been studied. The next section will consider the limited range of research involving the re-offending of women, and whether the few studies available provide evidence of significant gender differences.

4.4.5 *Prediction/Risk/Needs research applied to women*

There have been relatively few studies which have attempted to apply prediction instruments to women offenders (Gendreau, Goggin & Paparozzi, 1996). There are ideological constraints which feminist researchers may share, that cause them to hesitate to support the further classification and labelling of an offender population in order to more intrusively control this group. The question for feminist researchers is whether their research will advance the situation of the group of women with which they are concerned. Within a feminist paradigm it can be argued that women as a whole are already subject to intense social control and that to support systems that intensify the control of women and increase their dependency furthers their comparative disadvantage. However, where women offenders are subjected to transposed assumptions about their offending based on understandings gained from male offending, a greater harm may eventuate. A considerable body of studies about women offenders recommends that women's re-offending be further explored, rather than assuming that motivation, causation and needs are necessarily the same (Heidensohn, 1985, p.146). Women writers have been critical of the "distortion of experiences of women offenders to fit certain inappropriate stereotypes" (Heidensohn, 1985, p. 146). Such distortion has been seen to medicalise and infantilise the treatment of women offenders (Player & Jenkins, 1994). The 1980s challenge mounted by feminist critiques of criminology advocated more equal treatment and opportunities for women offenders. At the same time, the dilemma remains that the female offender population is relatively small and it may be counterproductive to apply prevailing assessment models if they do not recognise differences between men's and women's offending.

A number of studies have tested the application of static variables associated with male offenders to female offenders (Bonta, Pang & Wallace-Capretta, 1995; Coulson, Ilacqua, Nutbrown, Guilekes, & Cudjoe, 1996; Jones & Sims, 1997; Loucks & Zamble, 1994, 1999). A range of deficits were found to be shared between male and female offenders in the Loucks and Zamble study, including early adoption or fostering, leaving school early, and histories of anti-social behaviour (1994). Bonta et al. (1995), found doubtful predictive validity with the application of a Canadian risk scale to a group of women offenders. Only two items were found to predict re-offending of women and these were age at first adult conviction and sentence length. This study excluded two potentially significant variables of employment status and dependent children. The LSI-R, (Level of Supervision Inventory Revised) has been administered with groups of women offenders (Coulson, et al., 1996). The results

varied and the writers reported higher levels of predicted recidivism than that of most LSI-R studies with male offenders.

Jones and Sims (1997) compared male and female re-offending in North Carolina and found significant similarities and differences based on gender. They focused on a combination of personal and background variables, which included: age, ethnicity, original offence, level of education, marital status (at time of release), imprisonment, substance abuse and employment histories. Their studies found similarities between men and women in terms of static predictors, with some significant differences in some psycho-social factors such as suicide attempts.

The more recent Loucks and Zamble study (1999) applied both static and dynamic variables in relation to re-offending of women. The variables comprised four categories; social, personal, criminal history, and history of maladaptive behaviour. Their conclusions were that female, serious violent offenders shared similar predictors in terms of re-offending with their male counterparts. They concluded that their results contradicted class-based theories that focus on socio-structural factors to explain women's re-offending. In addition, they argue that theories that rely on victimisation to explain women's criminality are not supported by their findings (Loucks & Zamble, 1999). It is worthwhile noting that this study was predicated on individual offender deficits and was not examining the possible influence of environmental factors.

A review of prediction studies by Simond and Andrews (cited in Gendreau, 1996) examined 60 studies and concluded that women were more likely to be more affected by factors of a "situational and socially interactive nature" (Gendreau, 1996, p.67). The factors were not clarified further and continued use of the LSI-R was recommended for women offenders irrespective of the possible importance of other variables.

This view was not shared by Miller, et al. (1995), who, while recognising that "medicine and psychology have generalised the results of studies conducted with males to programmes and practices serving females", describe a range of characteristics of adolescent female offenders which are significantly different from young males (Miller et al., 1995, p.432). Whilst this dissertation is concerned with adult women offenders, research about adolescent women can provide additional information since it is likely that some characteristics across age groups remain. Miller et al., point to higher levels of victimisation, and involving both physical and sexual abuse, among young

women offenders. Female victims of such abuse are likely to have serious problems with “self-image, sexual attitudes, family relations, vocational and educational goals and mastering their environment” (Miller et al., 1995, p.430). The writers also found high levels of dependency and anxiety among young women offenders.

Another study with adolescent women found age at first offence to be a significant predictor of re-offending (Archwamety & Katsiyannis, 1998). A range of other factors were also associated with the re-offender group such as: gang affiliation, location of residence, mathematical skills and length of stay in a correctional facility (1998, p.59).

4.4.6 Psychiatric factors and women offenders

Other research with adult women offenders has found high levels of psychiatric disorder among both adult and young women offenders (Maden, Swinton & Gunn, 1994, Maden, 1997). Maden considers that mental health issues are the most significant factors for women in comparison with other domains. There has been a high level of psychiatric morbidity assessed in the women’s prison population in New Zealand but this has not been linked in systematic fashion with re-offending (National Study of Psychiatric Morbidity in New Zealand Prisons, 1999). The identification of psychiatric needs among women offenders accords with Zamble and Quinsey’s (1997) findings in relation to male offenders, although the New Zealand data suggest a higher incidence among the New Zealand women offender population.

4.4.7 Economic factors related to women’s re-offending

The review of studies thus far illustrates the predominance of the psychological and deficit paradigm in relation to research about crime and women’s re-offending. There have been few studies that have explored women’s crime from a theoretical position that considers re-offending may constitute a rational response to social strain factors.

Whilst many studies have referred to the socio-economic disadvantage of prison populations, the effect of economic factors on recidivism has been rarely considered (Hannon & De Fronzo, 1998). Where economic factors are considered in prevailing risk measurement, the measure is based on individuals’ ability to manage their finances (See Community Probation Risk Assessment Scale and

Assessment of Offender Needs, Department of Corrections, 1999) not on the sufficiency of income support.

Few studies that explore economic variables have been conducted with released women prisoners. Apart from the qualitative work of Carlen (1988) in the UK, the most significant empirical research has been that of Jurik in the US, reported in 1983. This study is worthy of in-depth consideration because it represents one of the very few attempts to present a microeconomic analysis of women's recidivism. Jurik used the results of the TARP project, or Transitional Aid Research Project, to present an analysis of the "relationships among economic need, employment, and recidivism patterns of women ex-offenders." (Jurik, 1983, p.603). The project was also a response to the fact that field workers working with released women recognised the importance of economic factors in post-release adjustment.

TARP was a project set up to "examine the effect of transfer payments to newly released felons on their probability of rearrest for property crimes" (Jurik, 1983, p.604). The population of the study comprised all prisoners released from state prison in Texas and Georgia during the first six months of 1976. Direct-income transfer-payments were made to prisoners on release via unemployment insurance. Some participants were also offered special job-seeking grants and unlimited job search counselling. The underlying theoretical, economic assumptions were that increased legal employment would lead to reduced criminal behaviour and that direct-income transfer-payments would reduce re-offending. The researchers hypothesized that the direct-income transfer-payments would conversely lead to continued dependence on payments as opposed to legal employment, and hence to an increase in property offending.

The study found that TARP payments and employment reduced the level of property crime. Other exogenous factors such as education and vocational training, and family status variables, did not exercise significant effects on post-release employment. Interestingly, and unlike later studies, this study found that prior criminal history was not significant in predicting the re-arrest patterns of TARP participants.

Women ex-prisoners comprised 5% of the TARP sample, and it is this group which Jurik considered warranted separate analysis because of the major differences in offence patterns and types of offences, in addition to the "unique adjustment problems for women ex-offenders" (Jurik, 1983,

p.605). Among considerations were women's familial role in relation to childcare responsibilities, and the potential difficulties that resuming custody and parenting imposed on released women. For the purposes of the study, Jurik reclassified prostitution and drug offences as "property" crimes because of the economic motivation she regarded was instrumental in both types of offending.

Individual level data from the TARP project was analysed by grouping exogenous factors into three broad categories of economic need, employment opportunities, and some selected recidivism variables excluding economic factors. The last category included previous criminal history and age because "older offenders may find criminal involvement to be an increasingly costly activity" (Jurik, 1983, p. 608). The question of the influence of primary relationships for women on release was approached from two points of view. On the one hand, women were expected to be protected from the need to commit property crime if they were supported by an income-earning partner. On the other hand, they were expected to re-offend if their partner was involved in criminal activity and there was an expectation that this was part of the resumed relationship. The presence of dependent children was expected to operate similar protective and/or risk factors of re-offending, on the grounds that children may place increased demands on a parent's time and therefore limit the amount of time for criminal activity. At the same time, dependent children limit the parent's opportunity to undertake full-time employment and may increase financial pressure on released women, leading to re-offending for economic reasons. The question of addiction and its possible influence on re-offending in order to meet drug supply and/or money supply, was not included as part of the economic analysis. This is one of the problems engendered by single or dominant feature approaches in exploring the relationship between recorded criminal offence history and actual offending behaviour.

The TARP sample of women ex-offenders represented the "bottom-most" socio-economic levels of society (Jurik, 1983, p.609). They were described as "poor, uneducated, and about 30 years of age" (Jurik, 1983, p.609). Most had left school at secondary school age and their educational achievement scores "fell well below their reported years of schooling" (Jurik, 1983, p.610). Sixty per cent of the sample was from a minority group and the majority came from broken homes and were raised by relatives. Between 50-55% were single at the time of release.

Jurik described their time in prison employment as minimal compared with the male ex-offender sample, and only 10% received vocational training while in prison. Comparison with the male

sample on the basis of criminal history revealed a lesser number of convictions and less serious offences overall, with the largest proportion sentenced for property, drug-related, or fraud offences.

The impact of the aggregated factors on the TARP women was a particular vulnerability to financial pressure through lack of employment opportunity and continued dependence on others for income maintenance. Belonging to an ethnic minority, having limited employment skills and histories, the stigma of criminal records, in addition to the need to care for dependent children, meant that women were more likely to experience “serious economic pressures-particularly in the days after release” (Jurik, 1983, p.610).

The results of Jurik’s analysis of the 125 TARP ex-offender women participants indicated a sufficient degree of difference from the results with the TARP male ex-offenders to warrant further exploration. Overall, the study found that female ex-offenders “do indeed respond to economic incentives” (Jurik, 1983, p.617). Both the income transfer payments and legal employment led to a reduction in economic-related arrests. A correlation was found between TARP payments and disincentive to find employment, and Jurik suggests that if the income transfer payments were not subject to the criteria of unemployment there would be more incentive to seek employment. The amount of money an ex-offender had at the point of release had a significant effect on the “number of weeks employed and the number of economic arrests” (Jurik, 1983, p.618). While employment had a positive effect in reducing offending, women were more likely to re-offend while employed than the male offender sample. Jurik’s assumption for this gender difference was that the lower earning capacity of women and their greater economic need increased the need to commit economic offences. Unlike the male sample, women ex-offenders’ age did not appear to affect levels of re-offending. Older women had a “probability of rearrest approximating that for younger TARP women” (Jurik, 1983, p.618).

The family status indicators revealed differences between men and women in that “male romantic attachments appeared to lessen the women ex-felons’ economic problems” (Jurik, 1983, p.618). Women living with a male on release worked significantly less and women in relationships were less likely to take advantage of the income transfer payments. Jurik argued that attachment to a male after release may have been perceived by some women as a solution to post-release pressures although fewer women were successful in “finding mates during the study year” (Jurik, 1983, p.618). Romantic attachments were defined as heterosexual only in this study, and other forms of

relationships were not considered. The expectation that dependent children would influence rate of re-offending were not borne out by the study, although Jurik cautioned that the sample was too small to be able to generalise the findings.

In conclusion, Jurik expressed concern about the lack of employment skills and educational attainment of the TARP women, and the lack of opportunity in the prison environment to enhance their employability. She also raised the issue of the over-dependence of the women ex-offenders on others for economic survival after imprisonment. This confirmed the importance of considering “sociological factors such as sex roles and occupational expectations along with economic variables (Jurik, 1983, p.619) and not simply economic variables based on men’s experience in the labour market. The lack of preparation for release from prison led the author to suggest that day care centres for women, where intensive vocational programmes were available, may assist with the transitional period of return to the community.

The fact that women may experience greater financial pressure due to their societal role on reintegration supports revised strain theory. The possibility that they have different forms of social attachment on return to the community supports *revised control theory*. *Strain theory* in regard to released women has been supported by more recent research on the effects of welfare support on property crime (Hannon & De Fronzo, 1998). This study found in a sample of both men and women released from prison that “welfare allows recipients to obtain desired goods legally, thus reducing criminogenic strain.” (Hannon & De Fronzo, 1998, p.284). The authors also found that men and women reacted differently in response to strain with different patterns of offending.

4.4.8 *Recent New Zealand quantitative research on static and dynamic factors and women’s re-offending.*

Recent quantitative research in New Zealand has followed the North American example and applied widely accepted static and dynamic factors to the women’s prison population in Christchurch (Moth & Hudson, 1999). This study will be considered in full at this point because it provides a context with which the quantitative results from my study may be compared.

Both authors refer to the overall “remarkable” paucity of information in relation to women’s re-offending both internationally and in New Zealand (Moth & Hudson, 1999, p.1). This study will be

reported in some detail given that it is the most recent attempt to apply predictive factors to women offenders in the New Zealand context. It involved interviews with 37 women residing in Christchurch Women's Prison and from this point of view is comparable with the participant group of 26 in this study. Moth and Hudson (1999) applied the LSI-R²⁶ and the CNIA or (Case Needs Identification and Analysis developed by the Canadian Corrections Department). The LSI-R measures both risk and needs and corresponds to the Risk assessment administered in this research. The LSI-R pre-dates the CNIA. The CNIA specifically measures criminogenic need criteria that are similar to the criminogenic needs listed in the LSI-R.

The assessment in the LSI-R is in a Yes/No format with the variables scored from 0-3. Each category has a number of sub-items that relate to the category concerned (number of items in parentheses) and are as follows:

- Criminal history (10)
- Education/employment (10)
- Financial (2)
- Family/marital (4)
- Accommodation (3)
- Leisure/recreation. (2)
- Companions (5)
- Alcohol/drug problems (9)
- Emotional/Personal (5)
- Attitude/Orientation (4)

The information obtained through the assessments is used to determine offender classification and sentence recommendations.

The categories in the CNIA have now been incorporated in the new offender classification and assessment system in the New Zealand Department of Corrections.²⁷ The following list constitutes the categories (or what Moth and Hudson refer to as "domains") in the CNIA:

²⁶ The Limited Service Inventory was developed in 1982 and combined social learning theory, probation officer opinion and effectiveness research in an assessment.

²⁷ The new classification and assessment system is referred to as IOMS or Integrated Offender Management System.

- Employment domain
- Marital/Family domain
- Associates/Social domain
- Substance Abuse domain
- Community Function Domain
- Personal Emotional Domain
- Attitude Domain.

As can be seen, whilst the CNIA measures dynamic factors or those areas where individuals may change, the LSI-R has a greater emphasis on static offence-related variables that are not subject to change.

After applying both types of assessment, Moth and Hudson found in regard to the LSI-R that there was a possibility that the “New Zealand prison system is underestimating the level of security required (for women offenders), at least in terms of the LSI-R” (1999, p.51). However, there was insufficient comparable data available to determine whether the classification of women in New Zealand prisons differed markedly from other jurisdictions. The Moth & Hudson report did not question the applicability of the risk assessment tool, that is, whether the high-risk scores of their respondents equated to actual high risk of re-offending. They did conclude that they identified a “number of factors that may impact upon an offending lifestyle...” (1999, p.XI).

Their conclusion in regard to criminogenic needs was that “over eighty per cent of the women evidenced significant ‘difficulty’ in six of the seven domains of the CNIA, including, education/employment, marital/family, substance use, community functioning, personal/emotional and attitudes” (1999, p.IX). In addition, over 40% had difficulty in the Associates domain. When the CNIA results were compared with similar Canadian offender populations the authors found a greater level of need or difficulty experienced by the New Zealand cohort.

The focus of the Moth & Hudson research was not on female re-offending *per se*, but rather it was on reviewing the applicability and relevance of standard classification methods of female offenders in New Zealand. However, the emphasis of the classification methods was on the prediction of re-offending and therefore relates to the purpose of this study. My own study proceeded to take a

broader view of re-offending factors based on a wider appreciation of factors that may be related to re-offending as outlined in Parts 2 and 3 of this study.

4.4.9 *Conclusion regarding the implications of release needs and risk/prediction research.*

A number of authors have expressed reservation about the aims and objectives of mainstream, criminological research of which prediction research is an important component. The reservations can be grouped under those that broadly agree with the premises of mainstream research (Gendreau, 1996; Palmer, 1994) and those that disagree with the fundamental propositions of mainstream discourse (Carlen, 1983; Carlen et al, 1985; Smart, 1985; Worrall, 1990).

Palmer has referred to the danger in overlooking potentially significant variables, often not described in research design (Palmer, 1994, 1995). He described “non-programmatic” elements of interventions with offenders, which may determine reintegration success. Ecological and environmental factors were included in “non-programmatic” elements, which he considered may influence criminal offending. His concern was that a narrow, theoretical view of what factors may contribute to crime, which may be a view that is more ideologically driven than readily apparent, will not necessarily reflect the practical reality of ex-offenders’ lives.

Other writers have criticised the categorisation of offenders, in the belief that individuals and individual behaviour need to be understood in terms of their unique circumstances. “If we do this at all, we must understand that they are labelled merely for the sake of convenience. Each individual is unique, his [*sic*] behaviour is motivated by a complex series of influences working upon his unique structure, and he reacts to these stimuli differently than any other person” (Teeters, 1995, p.63).

Teeters (1995) cautions against oversimplification of crime causation where particular solutions are based on any one set of factors. He warns of the limited effect of current remedies which may be based on the assumption that a particular set of factors is “bound to elicit delinquent or criminal behaviour whenever they occur” (Teeters, 1995, p.64). Zamble and Quinsey refer to the danger of applying static predictors to offender populations which “will provide little incentive for inmates to change their current behaviour patterns” (Zamble & Quinsey, 1997, p.4).

Some studies have been critical of the lack of research into protective factors and the predominance of risk factors research. It is known that “not all those who are exposed to high risks for criminal offending go on to commit criminal acts” (Corbett & Petersilia, 1994, p.53) and the question remains why some individuals manage to resist the factors which are understood to contribute to crime. The interrelatedness of protective factors and resiliency has not been explored. Resiliency has been likened to the capacity for individuals to bend without breaking and to spring back under similar life experiences. The problem of defining protective versus resiliency factors remains. Variables have been shown to have the capacity to expose individuals to both protection and risk (Corbett & Petersilia, 1994, p.53). Significant relationships with either parents or partners may produce either effect and it is the quality of the relationship which may then be the decisive factor. This may be particularly relevant to women’s offending in reflecting their social role in relation to their families of origin and to their partners.

Other caution has been expressed about the relatively few longitudinal studies in criminology where recidivism is usually measured in the three-six month period after release from prison. Palmer has referred to the studies which have shown that behaviourist techniques appear to lose their effect after longer periods of review (Palmer, 1994, p.19). The lack of consideration of ethnicity and gender has also called into question the applicability of current research. In addition, caution has been urged in regard to the use of official records as the measure of criminal offending because of the inherent limitations of policing and processing of offenders (Corbett & Petersilia, 1994, p.54).

Some writers have raised the wider issues of the divisiveness of current criminological discourse where the attention paid to offender populations perceived to cause the greatest harm, leads to overlooking other less obvious offenders involved in white-collar, sexual abuse, and domestic violence crimes (Clear, 1994; Pilger, 1998). They are concerned that the preoccupation with selected group pathologies leads to the abandonment of “broader preventive strategies” which address “restorative programmes in housing, education and employment” as well as criminal behaviour (Clear, 1994, p.68).

Other concerns raised about preoccupation with “dangerousness” are that the increasingly sophisticated instruments employed to assess degree of risk are now based on actuarial methods which see the “replacement of a moral or clinical description of the individual with an actuarial language of probabilistic calculations” (Pratt, 1995, p.25). The inclination to employ such

assessments beyond discrete administrative situations to encompass and influence sentencing criteria and ongoing offender management decisions, raises issues of fairness in the criminal justice process whereby individuals are managed according to static criteria. Pratt (1995) argues that there is a risk that the new technologies will be employed as more advanced systems of discipline and surveillance rather than with rehabilitative intent. Despite the best intentions of researchers, it is clear that where they have recommended rehabilitative uses for prediction and risk research this goal becomes subsumed by the more powerful goals created by punitive policies and regimes (Van Voorhis, 1994).

Feminist writers have levelled more fundamental criticisms at mainstream research. McQuaide & Ehrenreich (1998) refer to the inadequacy of the “positivistic, psychometric, and sociometric approaches” which they perceive to have difficulty in accounting for “how a particular woman experiences her own unique life as well as how her shared experiences of gender, race and ethnicity” affect her (1998, p.238). They argue that qualitative research is more likely to reveal the coping mechanisms and particular resiliency women develop in response to factors influencing criminal involvement. However, as Naffine has stated, in the current research climate “the agile manipulation of very large numbers is highly esteemed, and concomitantly philosophical speculation or small-scale qualitative research is less highly valued” (Naffine, 1997, p.17).

Along with Carlen (1998), feminist writers regard women’s gendered social experience as different from that of men and therefore criminal justice systems need to take account of such differences. McQuaide and Ehrenreich (1998) emphasise the heterogeneity that is obscured by any all-encompassing definition of gender and remind researchers of the significance of race, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation in shaping women’s lives. In an analysis of differential power and status, they refer to the likelihood of the prison experience having a different effect on middle class women as opposed to African American women, or gay women as opposed to heterosexual women. Gender, in this analysis is the matrix of relative power for women and other factors affect their experience of their relative status within the matrix.

Carlen posits the question of whether feminist writers should focus on reforming current practice in order to have effect in the short term, by recognising the “ideologically disadvantaged” position of women now, or to pursue long term goals of abolitionism (Carlen & Tchaikovsky, 1996, p.211). The logical explanation of this argument in relation to community-based programmes for women

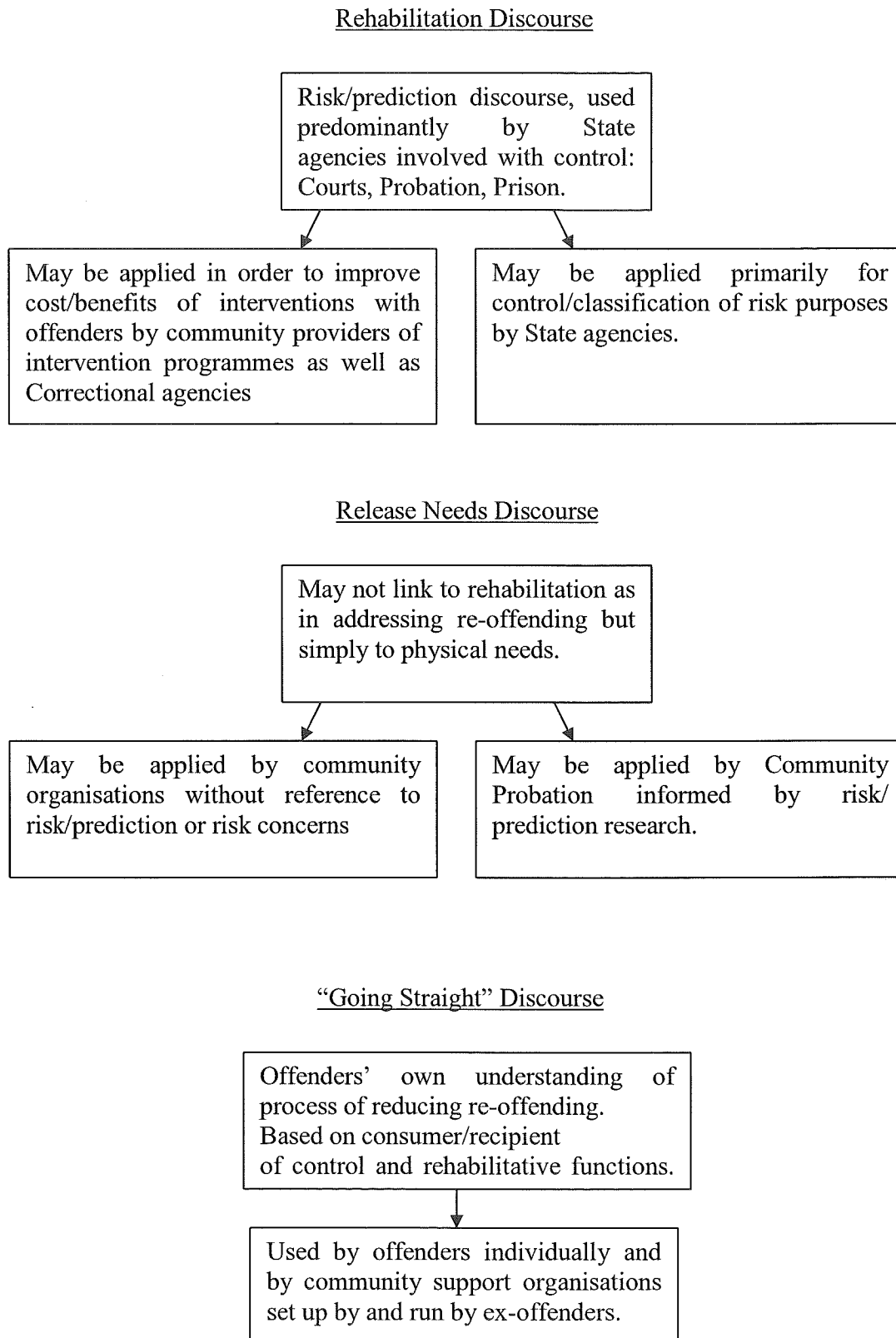
offenders would be whether to advocate for the abandonment of “mainstream” approaches and the development of alternatives. Both approaches have merit in respect of imprisonment, according to Carlen. The first, because it supports the notion of “substantive equality” for women offenders, and the second because it challenges the conventional ideologies imposed on women by way of mainstream assumptions about the nature of women’s offending and how they should be treated in the criminal justice system.

Other writers have questioned the scientific validity of positivist research, which has selected hypotheses and variables without reflecting on the values and societal place of the researcher. Naffine (1997) presents an account of the many instances where criminological writers have ignored their own gender and the implications this has for their perspectives at the outset of undertaking research. This assumption of value-free research has then been compounded by the assumption that findings that have been deduced from research with men can be equally applied to women (Naffine, 1997).

Clements has raised the problem of confused intentions and goals in research. He argues that it is “unlikely, based on current research, that a multilevel, integrative system can be based on one assessment instrument, or one conceptual scheme, or one diagnostic point in time” (Clements, 1996, p.138). However, the tendency of correctional administrators, given the constraints within which they operate, is to seek the most immediately cost-effective solution to classification and treatment of offenders. The actuarial systems of measurement of re-offending are attractive in their simplicity and are relatively easy to apply. Clinical decisions which are based on dynamic factors are potentially more costly to implement, and ecological changes which may reduce re-offending are rarely considered. The purposes of classification need to be clear, because there are major differences between classification for the purpose of measuring security risk and classification in order to effect rehabilitation.

There are implications for the New Zealand context in the current confusion demonstrated by international research in the area of re-offending. The following diagram attempts to represent some of the applications of research in New Zealand and the agencies which may be familiar with and/or are involved with particular aspects of rehabilitation research.

Figure 4.1: Discourse analysis of terms applied in relation to released women offenders



Other terminologies employed in the rehabilitation arena such as reintegration, resettlement and adjustment may be applied primarily within the release needs discourse. Within the prediction/risk discourse, recidivism is commonly used.

It is likely that some community support organisations such as PARS, would debate whether risk/prediction should be considered a part of rehabilitation. This goes to the notion that rehabilitation implies a positive process rather than the negative connotations of risk. Services such as PARS do not discriminate in their service delivery between offender groups but rather they provide a generic service in the hope that some positive change will result. Current risk/prediction research and the meanings attached to particular concepts may be irrelevant to their sphere of interest and to their purpose.

Likewise, it is debatable how useful an individual offender may find psychometric instruments used in order to measure his/her likelihood of re-offending. It is questionable as to whether such research serves the interests of the offender in addressing release needs, or whether it is simply another tool to manage risk in ways that reduce public concerns about re-offending but which leaves the released offender to tolerate considerable social distress. There is a compelling argument to support such a stance, that research is solely occupied with meeting correctional administrators' needs, if research is not connected to improving programmes and services to released inmate populations.

It is understandable that the State is currently concerned with management of risk given political imperatives, although a cursory glance at penal history will show that, in some periods, risk does not occupy a pre-eminent place in penal philosophy and policy. The Ministerial Review of the New Zealand Prisons System in 1989 showed concern and interest in rehabilitation and in managing risk in favour of rehabilitation rather than in favour of retribution. Current management contracts in both prisons and probation apply demerit points for adverse publicity and unfavourable management of risk, and so it is hardly surprising that risk has come to occupy prominence in criminal justice discourse. Criminological research is carried out within particular political and societal climates and its application creates potential conflict in terms of whose interests it serves.

Despite this "systems" preoccupation with risk, the fact remains that prisoners are released throughout New Zealand and many will not be required to have further involvement with criminal

justice systems.²⁸ The questions of survival and how to re-establish oneself in the community become central preoccupations for released offenders. These areas are currently overlooked, as much of earlier discussion in relation to risk and prediction research has highlighted. The next section will consider the New Zealand social services/community environment into which women offenders are released. Some reference has been made to community social services and income support policy as they pertain to released prisoners. The next section explores this area more fully, particularly in regard to the relationship between social work and social services. The contribution that social work as a profession makes to the social services arena and to social policy development will be discussed in terms of how this may impact on conditions released prisoners experience. Related to the social services environment is the role that social work practice plays in terms of the treatment of released prisoners. This contextualises my own professional involvement and experience of working within criminal justice as a social work practitioner.

²⁸ According to the New Zealand Prison Census 1999, 56% of women are sentenced to less than two years imprisonment that usually means automatic release without parole conditions (Criminal Justice Act 1985, 1993 Amendments)

Conclusion to Part Two

The fundamental questions raised by the major challenges to current, mainstream criminological theory and practice, require that the prevailing methods and systems in place which manage and treat offenders are critically approached. The discussion thus far reveals the extent to which assumptions that are made about what questions should be asked and how they should be asked, determine research about women offenders. The process of policy development which determines what happens to released offenders is a complex one that reflects competing discourses and competing interests. At the present time, there is minimal explicit policy in relation to women offenders in New Zealand. They are at the tail end of a long process which rarely considers their particular situation. It is rare that women offenders themselves are accorded a voice in the process of policy and research, apart from fulfilling roles that are driven by others' imperatives. However, released women will experience policy created by others and for others in their process of reintegration. Given the fact that women are affected in particular ways by their biological/ familial roles and their prescribed role in socialising future generations, it is not surprising also that policy-making has a direct effect on their dependants and their familial and community organisation networks. They, too, are disempowered by research, which ignores the ways in which their individual and organisational lives are affected.

Part One traversed the descriptive data about women offenders primarily based on official records, and related contemporary data, to historical trends and significant criminal justice events. In order to understand the ideas that inform contemporary New Zealand criminal justice approaches to released women, Part Two explored a range of influential international theories about crime. The legacy of criminological theory, based on research with male offenders, had to be traversed in order to background theory as it has been applied to women. This has come about through the historical neglect of women offenders as a discrete group in terms of research.

The process of review of others' ideas in regard to women's re-offending has culminated in an array of possible variables that may be explored in relation to women's re-offending in New Zealand. Part three of this study will canvas how the research project ensued from the review of the context of women and re-offending. The selection of factors in the research project that follows was based on a growing understanding of what has become commonly associated with women's re-offending in prior research in a variety of disciplines. It became apparent to me that my own exploration of

women's re-offending needed to build on what was known and to combine those factors with others that were based on my years of social work practice. I began to work at a synthesis of ideas about women's re-offending that would mean selecting those factors originating from different theoretical traditions such as psychology and sociology and exploring them with a group of released women. The exploration would be governed by an overall commitment to feminist theory that allowed for the participants to add their own individual perspectives about their offending. The overriding feminist paradigm also determined that the research would be designed in such a way as to advance the situation of the women concerned. This could be achieved by applying a feminist strengths perspective to research about women's crime, in a way that has not been attempted thus far, to my knowledge. Rather than be deficit-determined this investigation was to be strengths-determined also and this would be achieved by exploring what has worked for released women. Part Three of this study will explain how the descriptive data in Part One coupled with the theoretical explanations in Part Two are combined with social work practice wisdom to form the basis of the research project. Part Three places the researcher as a person with unique social identities in the research. It positions the research project in a social work research context, for that is the perspective that I bring to the field of women's re-offending.

PART THREE: METHODOLOGICAL THEORY AND PROCESS

Introduction to Part Three

Part Three begins by discussing the feminist perspective within which this research project fits. This discussion will be in the style of a review of the major theories that underpin a feminist perspective that has guided the progress of the research. The perspective is represented in diagrammatic form and reference will be made to this diagram throughout Part Three. Since “Theories-however implicit- about what constitutes knowledge (i.e. epistemology) ground and to a large extent determine the methods that we use to gather our data” (Cosgrove & McHugh, 2000, p.816), the methodology and methods flow from the epistemological framework.

Whilst the first chapters in Part Three deal with ideas in broad theoretical fashion, the methodology section brings the theory into practice by demonstrating how the ideas informed the methods chosen for the study. The methodology discussion will consider how the practice and experience of the research in turn informed theory development. This is a reflexive approach, where it is accepted that the researcher is continually processing data which is either confirming or disconfirming understandings about the social phenomena that is being explored (Fook, 1996). In accordance with the basic tenets of feminism and constructivism, the researcher is placed in the research by accounting for the influence of the actor in research praxis. The personal account of the way that the research was conducted is connected to the ideas of other writers and researchers, in order to place that personal account within a social science context.

Although a research process is not linear, the steps taken will be recounted in a relatively linear fashion from beginning to end, culminating in a wide range of data to comprehend and analyse. By taking this approach it is anticipated that the reader will be able to follow the reasoning and justification for the actions that were taken. To understand those reasons necessitates an appreciation of the motivation and considerations of the “agent” in the action.

Whilst the research process is set out chronologically as a means to order the account, understandings from the research practice will not necessarily follow a chronological development, but a more eclectic to and fro process as the researcher flows between inductive and deductive

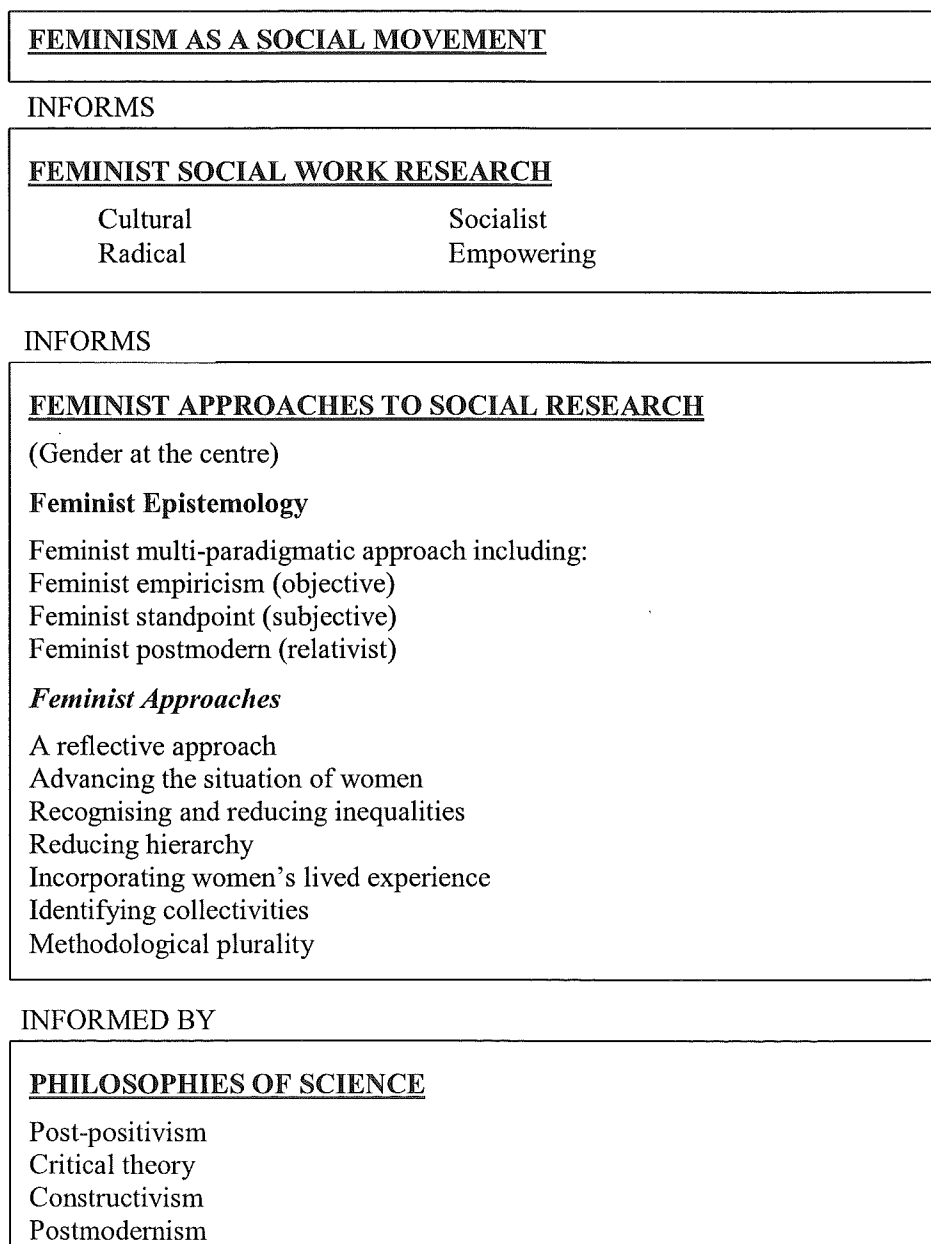
insights. Argyris and Schön (1974) have distinguished between “theory-in-use” and “espoused theory” to attempt to describe the complexities of human experience where the unpredictability of human situations may require adjustments to preconceived understandings. By following the steps taken by the researcher, the reader may appreciate why events were ordered as they were and why particular courses of action were taken. It is this process of application of theory in the reality of the research situation that helps to explain why the process took its particular course. In turn, the particular narrative of the research process will help to explain the nature of the findings to be described and discussed in Part Four of this study. What follows is a chapter that sets the theoretical scene of the research. It describes the basic tenets of feminism since this perspective had an all-encompassing influence throughout the inception, process and analysis of the research.

Chapter Five

Overview of Theoretical Approach

I have constructed the following diagram to provide an overview of the ideas that constitute the substance of the feminist perspective that have guided the course of this study. Each of the bodies of knowledge that inform the perspective is dealt with in discussion of feminism as a social movement and feminist social science epistemology.

Figure 5.1: Diagram of epistemology and methodology chosen for this study.



The diagram of the major theories underpinning the research does not represent an immutable state, but rather it represents a dynamic and continually evolving process. Whilst the major principles underlying a “woman-centred” approach will be less subject to interpretation, the degree to which research may or may not advance the situation of particular groups of women will be subject to a range of different factors, including the nature of the research itself. The following provides the socio-political context of the movement of feminism that laid the foundation for feminist social science research.

5.1 Feminism

This research is “woman-centred”; it is about a group of women distinguished by a shared social experience. It follows the emergent tradition of feminist research that has grown internationally, since the second wave of feminism during the 1970s. Feminist research has emerged as a part of the political movement of second wave “feminism”.

Feminism grew out of Western European democracies at the turn of the twentieth century. The first wave of feminism was so called because it was the first organised articulation of a separate woman’s voice that raised the question of gender inequality and challenged the constitutional and legal institutions that reinforced the lower status of women. The focus of early feminists was to democratise the political process by including women, as of right, in basic constitutional rights such as the right to vote (Sutch, 1973). Achieving emancipation led to consequent rights such as the right to stand for parliament and for local body office.

Emancipation did not achieve equal consideration for women in other areas of public life and women’s societal role remained defined largely by her biological and domestic functions (Briar, Munford & Nash, 1993; Sutch, 1973). This was fundamentally challenged during the second wave of feminism in the 1970s and where women claimed equal consideration in all areas of public life, particularly in employment and legal status. The second wave of feminism achieved greater recognition of women’s ability to work outside previously prescribed occupations and roles, and to achieve leadership in their selected occupations (Friedan, 1963; Greer, 1970). International campaigns for equal pay, equal opportunity and for women to control their biological functions became symbolic of the second wave feminist movement.

A third wave of feminism as a social movement, has been less concerned with institutional equality with men in terms of legislation and discriminatory practice and more concerned with the capacities and potential of women to achieve in their chosen fields (Vasquez, 2001). The third wave of feminism in academia during the 1990s has been influenced by a postmodern recognition of “plural constructions and diverse realities” (Mann & Kelley, 1997, p.392). The two main areas of concern are comparable in that the social movement has focused on exploring women’s potential to achieve, whilst women scholars have focussed on the ability of marginalised groups of women to achieve. The third wave of feminism has recognised a greater variety of women’s voices expressing different perspectives within an overall feminist philosophy. Black feminism, for example, has presented an alternative view of western-based feminism from the perspective of whether it has advantaged black women as a distinct group (Collins, 1989 & 1991; Williams, 1989). The black feminists’ claim has been that many of the concerns of the second wave of feminism were driven by white, middle class women whose primary interests were not necessarily representative of black women’s experience. The issues of racism and cultural imperialism are critical to third wave feminism.

The recent decades of feminist thinking and political action have produced a variety of divergent opinions within feminism that may be classified according to their relationship to political contexts. Hence, feminists can be broadly categorised according to sets of shared beliefs that distinguish feminists in terms of how they believe the situation of women may be advanced. Feminism is inherently political in the sense that as a movement its existence relied and still relies on its challenge to traditional, patriarchal power structures. Feminism requires that existing social institutions are critiqued in terms of whether they offer equal access and ownership for women. Differences lie in how this might be achieved.

The political strands of feminism can be broadly summarised into libertarian, conservative/liberal, socialist/social democratic, radical and black feminism. This typology is similar to that developed by Williams in the UK, (1989) and applied by Cheyne, O’Brien & Belgrave in New Zealand (1997), but incorporates aspects of the contemporary New Zealand political environment that had relevance at the time of this study. The following diagram summarises the typologies and adds in parentheses the nearest New Zealand political expression of the major theories during 1999. International comparisons are problematic in that the particular brand of feminism developed in New Zealand reflects a particular social history. Indeed, different strands of social democracy have also developed that distinguish New Zealand’s political ideologies from others. Despite such limitations, broad

comparisons are possible given the similarities between western-based belief systems. The political typologies reflect differing stances in relation to organised welfare. This is particularly relevant given that the majority of the women who participated in this study were reliant on state welfare.

Table 5.1: TYPOLOGY OF BROAD, FEMINIST POLITICAL STANCES

(New Zealand examples in parentheses)

Libertarian	Anti-collectivist Individual choice Advancement through individual effort Welfare through the private or voluntary sector and through family and individuals Women's advancement based on individual achievement	Political Tradition Right wing Unregulated market Friedman & Hayek (NZ, Douglas, Kerr, ²⁹ Act Party)
Conservative/Liberal	Reluctant collectivist Legal system to protect some rights Individual liberty with an Efficient capitalism Private and voluntary welfare mix. State welfare to meet the needs of the economy. Women's advancement through individual rights legislation.	Liberalism Some social democracy with emphasis on individual responsibility (NZ, National Party, Shipley ³⁰ , Women's Electoral Lobby)
Socialist	Collectivist within a capitalist framework. Welfare State central to redistribution of wealth to counter the inequalities of the market. Women's advancement to be actioned by legislation, and income and employment policies.	Social Democracy. Fabian socialism. Tawney, Keynes (New Zealand Labour Party, Alliance Party ³¹)
Radical	Welfare and employment Policies central to Redistribution of wealth to Create equality. Advancement of women through redistribution of Resources.	Marx, Engels (NZ Green Party, Bradford ³²).
Black Feminism	Challenges role of Welfare State in relation to racism. Collectivist but from an anti-racist, pro-cultural difference stance. Questions policies that effect institutional racism.	(NZ ³³ Mana Motuhake, Labour Party Maori caucus. Titewhai Harawira.)

²⁹ Roger Douglas was Finance Minister in the 1984 Labour government and strongly promoted a laissez-faire economic and social policy. Roger Kerr is a well-known New Zealand industrialist who was head of the Roundtable, a prominent laissez-faire business group.

³⁰ Jenny Shipley became New Zealand's first woman Prime Minister in 1990. Her publication of 'Welfare that Works' marked a return to residual welfare policies.

³¹ At the time of writing, 2003, The New Zealand Labour Party was in government in a 'centre left' coalition with the Alliance Party.

³² Sue Bradford is Green Party Member of Parliament espousing radical economic and social policy.

³³ There is no equivalent in New Zealand to 'Black Feminism'. New Zealand has an indigenous women's voice articulated by some Maori women members of Parliament and also by prominent Maori women in the community.

Each set of political beliefs has different implications for the way in which the situation of released women inmates may be approached by social policy. The macro scale of approaches to women and welfare impacts on the micro behaviour of social service personnel towards this particular group. The political framework in New Zealand in the above diagram represents the dominant political ideologies in Aotearoa/New Zealand at the time that the field interviews were undertaken. Broadly speaking, the most laissez-faire approach to the welfare of released women is represented by the libertarian and conservative/liberal tradition which holds that welfare is the responsibility of individuals and families (Cheyne, O'Brien & Belgrave, 1997). In contrast, the most institutional approach is represented by socialist and radical traditions. The political expression of such broad typologies is problematic in that it is rare that political parties can be prescriptively classified according to ideology, as frequently they express a mix of approaches. In terms of the material provision made for released women inmates, New Zealand has arguably followed a more residual approach whereby the state has offered a limited degree of support where individual and informal systems are expected to contribute. This has meant that the social service sector and informal support networks have been relied on historically to meet the needs of released inmates.

In addition to the wider socio-political context, the socio-political position of the researcher may impact on the nature of the research unless the researcher's own views are transparent and measures have been taken in the research to counteract bias. A strong libertarian belief in the responsibility of the individual for her/his own situation may lead a researcher towards only considering individual behaviour and how this may have contributed to a person's social circumstances. Conversely, a strong radical bias may preclude a researcher from recognising individual behaviour that may have contributed to the person's situation. It may lead the researcher to attribute structural causes to individual situations. The extremes of both stances would potentially limit the perceptions and understandings available to the researcher.

My own approach combines a blend of approaches. It recognises the potential influence of income support policy on the economic decisions individuals may take. It also recognises disparities in terms of how individual agency operates in determining economic decision-making. As a woman, it takes account of the way in which socially-gendered roles influence the quality of women's individual economic decisions and how those decisions may be influenced by macro-economic forces.

An example of this kind of macro-economic influence is the provision of State economic support for single parents. In New Zealand, individual choices were limited when such benefits were denied women as single parents (McClure, 1998). Similarly, the situation of women released from prison creates a potential economic vulnerability that the New Zealand government recognises by way of the Steps to Freedom Grant (Ministry of Social Development, Work and Income operating Manual, 2002). Pertinent to this study is whether the level of support is sufficient, (a macro issue), and how individual women use their entitlement, (a micro issue). Excluding either factor at the outset, would potentially limit a researcher's ability to comprehend the whole situation of a released inmate. It is this holistic view of a social problem that broadly corresponds with feminist social work research (Dominelli & McLeod, 1989).

The feminist movement as a political influence continues to play a role in shaping national and international politics. Whereas it found expression with the actions of strong women's groups and associations during the 1970s-80s, it now tends to react to public events by raising a feminist perspective. Women's organisations have become accepted as part of the socio-political structure with Ministries of Women's Affairs representing the interests of women at governmental level. The recent outcry in Australia about the role of its Governor-General in relation to the reporting of, and response to, child abuse, is an example of the organised response of Australian women's organisations to the conduct of prominent public figures.³⁴ It could be argued that much of what the second-wave women's movement had to say has now become normalised to the extent that women's assertiveness training and the provision of support for victims of domestic violence have both become a common feature of New Zealand society. Legislative changes such as the Matrimonial Properties Act in New Zealand have advanced the status of women as has the New Zealand Human Rights Act (1990) with its anti-discrimination provisions. The consequence of the historical changes wrought by the feminist movement has been to raise the level of public awareness of issues of gender and inequality. This in turn has led to a changed discourse on gender that now reflects a range of theoretical assumptions that find expression in various legislative and governmental practices.

³⁴ The Australian, 28 February, 2002 reported in its editorial that protests by a number of women's organisations against the Governor General were likely to disrupt the visit of the Queen to Australia. This was part of an ongoing campaign to challenge the Governor-General's historical handling of claims of sexual abuse of young women by a priest in his Diocese.

This study has been influenced by the overriding purpose of feminism, that of advancing the situation of women. It has also been influenced by the other maxim of the women's movement to develop collectives of interest around areas of concern to women. This relates to the purpose of this study outlined in the introduction, where the research has been placed in a feminist context. The fact that the participants belong to a group of women about which little is known apart from basic demographic data, has meant that it has had the intention to increase societal understanding of this group's needs. The basic demographic data indicate that released women inmates are also likely to be women who are particularly socially disadvantaged. In terms of critical political ideology, this requires that issues of inequality and oppression are also central to concern and inquiry about this group. Such concern within a feminist socialist tradition requires that research has a social policy purpose whereby the situation of this group of women may be advanced. Thus, it can be argued the research would need to fulfil the requirements of emancipation and empowerment.

Feminism with its critical antecedents can be seen as a broad social movement that has had far-reaching influence on many aspects of social life. Among those areas to be affected and changed have been traditional approaches to science that prevailed prior to the 1970s. There is a sense in which the political social movement of feminism has had a symbiotic relationship with women academics and writers who have promoted the development of a feminist social science that would serve similar aims as the political movement but within a different social and intellectual context. The following section goes on to explore the major tenets of a feminist socialist science as they have been developed over recent decades.

5.2 Feminist Social Science

5.2.1 Gender at the centre

Feminism has impacted on the major philosophies of science culminating in a new and distinct approach to social science research. Feminist scholars have argued that science has served the interests of dominant societal groups (Harding, 1987; Oakley, 1999; Reinharz, 1992; Stanley & Wise, 1983). The oppression of women and the social control of women meant that issues of concern to women have been ignored by traditional science. The first socio-political challenge for feminist scholars has been to gain admittance to higher education and acceptance as academic equals within tertiary education structures. In terms of the history of science, women's increased

role is a relatively recent event. Having gained admittance to universities and acceptance as researchers and writers in their own right, women began to introduce new areas of interest to explore. The requirement of feminism to focus on gender as central to analysis and to advance the situation of women placed unique requirements on feminist academics. Since feminism did not occur in a theoretical vacuum, its scholars began by reviewing and critiquing traditional social science theories and found they were inadequate to express its philosophy. Subsequent to this process of review, a feminist paradigm of social science research has emerged and some would argue is still developing as a response to ongoing critique (Harding, 1986, 1991; Oakley, 1999). Whilst considerations of gender have remained a significant distinguishing characteristic of the feminist social science paradigm, it now offers “a rich body of theory that offers much more than adding the particularity of women and gender...” (Locher & Prugl, 2001, p112).

In a number of social science areas, women challenged androcentrism and introduced new areas of study related to issues relevant to women’s lives. For example, Du Bois, in history, critiqued the androcentric bias of much historical writing, whilst Harding similarly critiqued traditional sociology (Du Bois, 1983; Harding, 1987).

The liberal feminist view has been to simply challenge sexist bias in research (Harding, 1987), while maintaining adherence to traditional social science methodologies and techniques. The socialist and radical perspective from whence the most persistent critique has emerged has fundamentally challenged traditional research theory and methodology. The latter group believed that a feminist approach to science needed to be developed so that the socio-political aims of feminism could be fulfilled (Fonow & Cook, 1991; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991; Oakley, 1999; Reinharz, 1992). This study is another in the broad socialist/radical tradition that seeks to “respect, understand, and empower women” (Campbell & Wasco, 2000, p.778).

Throughout the last fifteen years, a growing body of feminist methodological research has accumulated; much of it has consisted of antithetical critique. This body of writing continues to develop, representing a dynamic process that is by no means complete. The evolving and dynamic nature of feminist research has been widely referred to (Olesen, 1994; Reinharz, 1992). In many instances, methodological writing raises questions and possibilities in regard to feminist approaches (Reinharz, 1992) rather than answers and solutions. Despite the questions and dilemmas that much feminist social science writing has raised, there is now a body of research that has been subjected to

historical review and analysis and that now reveals a set of themes that can be defined as a feminist multi-paradigmatic perspective. The overriding purpose of this body of research has been to adopt and create new theory and method to ensure that women's experience became a central source of knowledge creation.

The feminist critique was built on the foundation of the social construction of knowledge – otherwise, how could the bias of traditional social science be accounted for? The purpose of empowerment and the value of respect required an ethical approach that demonstrated throughout research projects a caring for the relative social situation of women and at the same time an intention to achieve social change. In the socialist/radical tradition this also required a determination to advance the situation of the most disadvantaged women in society.

The following list comprises a composite of the predominant themes that have emerged from fifteen years of feminist social science writing. The five broad themes of feminist imperatives have been extrapolated from those writers who have followed critical and emancipatory approaches. They do not represent the stance of the narrow band of feminist writers who subscribe to purely positivist or liberalist views. Indeed, the majority of feminist writing argues that holding to a positivist and singly “objective” notion of knowledge acquisition is untenable in terms of the feminist critique. If, it is argued, science is value-neutral then the question needs to be answered as to how particular groups have clearly benefited above others from scientific endeavour. The fact that the great majority of feminist researchers and writers do not subscribe to positivism does not mean to say that they do not use quantitative methods in their research (Fonow & Cook, 1991; Reinharz, 1992). Rather, it denotes a philosophical stance that accepts an overriding subjectivity within which different ways of knowing may be subscribed to (Oakley, 1999).

Some feminist theorists emphasise quantitative as opposed to qualitative aspects of research methodology and *vice versa* (Fonow & Cook, 1991; Reinharz, 1992). The commonality between researchers at both ends of this continuum is the adherence to a set of broad, feminist themes. The themes have emerged from the broad epistemological framework of feminism; that is its underpinning subjectivity and intersubjectivity, its origins in praxis and its origins in differential power relationships. The list of themes is not exhaustive but is one that encompasses common threads in feminist research. The themes as I have constructed them represent an interweaving of theory and methodology. Feminist social science has adopted a range of theories from different

social science traditions. What distinguishes a “feminist” approach and has created a particular strand of social science research is the requirement to reflexively relate theory to praxis. In other words, feminist social scientists have constantly asked the fundamental question as to whether research inception, process and outcome serve to address the inequality that has motivated the research. The following themes typify the ways in which theory and methodology serve this purpose and each is discussed more fully in subsequent sub-headings.

- A contextualised understanding that accepts a socio-historical context to knowledge acquisition
- Recognising the social place of the researcher in terms of the role of values, biases and assumptions in the research
- Using reflexivity as a means to achieve the integrity and trustworthiness of the research in terms of its feminist aims
- Adopting a collaborative approach
- Using research as a tool for social change
- Giving voice to women’s experiences
- Speaking from the standpoint of oppressed groups
- Moving away from dichotomous thinking to utilising multi-method and multi-level approaches
- Paying attention to issues of diversity

(Campbell & Wasco, 2000; Christensen & Dahl, 1997; Cosgrove & McHugh, 2000; Dallimore, 2000; Fonow & Cook, 1991; Harding, 1991; Hill, Bond, Mulvey & Terenzio, 2000; Olesen, 1994; Locher & Prugl, 2001; Mann & Kelley, 1997; Oakley, 1999; Reinharz, 1992). Each is discussed fully and in turn under five supra headings.

5.2.2 *A contextualised understanding*

From earlier discussion, it is clear that feminism rests on the acceptance of a socio-historical context to knowledge acquisition. This runs counter to the traditional tenets of logico-positivism that argue that there exists an external reality that is revealed to the knower through experimental testing by the application of scientific rules. The history of different theories of knowledge acquisition in the western world has been described by Bertrand Russell (1972) as the process from superstition and intuitive belief, to scientific explanations for the natural world from the seventeenth century

onwards. The influence of scientific explanations and methods of analysing and explaining the natural world flowed from research about the physical to the social world. The scientific methods developed from what were understood to be objective observations of an external world relied on testing against prior knowledge in order to produce new facts.

This mode of thinking and research depended on a set of assumptions which have remained influential and which have only recently been challenged (Hughes, 1990, p.160). The set of assumptions were: (i) that there is a reality, which exists outside and independent of the observer: (ii) that the role of the researcher is to compare external reality against previously acquired hypotheses and theories: (iii) that the truth can be revealed by such a process and that knowledge of this reality can be gained through the senses. It is assumed that this is an objective process and that therefore it is free from value judgements (Naffine, 1997). The successor to *logico-positivism* that has come to be termed *post-positivist* theory has modified the more rigid positions of the earlier science (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The certainty of logico-positivism has been replaced by *probability*, on the assumption that research findings are probably true but can be falsified by further research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). *Post-positivism* maintains an objective stance, but this is modified by the subjective acceptance that human knowledge of the world is problematic due to the inadequacy of human ability to comprehend the world. Post-positivists may use qualitative methods of research but believe in the possibility of objectivity. They rely on triangulation or critical multiplicity to gain multiple perceptions of an event (Franklin, 1996). Post-positivists prefer quantitative techniques, thereby maintaining adherence to the notion that objectivity is more likely to be achieved by the use of sophisticated statistical and experimental techniques.

The antithesis that developed as a challenge to historical, logico-positivist orthodoxies was the *hermeneutic tradition* or interpretive science, which claimed difficulties in applying the same methods of analysis to the social world (Hughes, 1990). Its challenge to positivist external reality, and to the universal laws assumed to govern science, was that "The socio-historical world is a symbolic world created by the human mind and cannot be understood as simply a relationship of material things" (Hughes, 1990, p.90). This view that there is an internal world-view imbued by culture and social context has in recent years been extended by *social constructivism* and *social constructionism* to the view that social reality is entirely socially constructed and does not exist outside its social context (Sarbin & Kitsuse, 1994). Constructivism represents a range of differing viewpoints that have emerged from within different disciplines (Guba, 1990; Schwandt, 1994;

Steier, 1991). Despite some differences within the theory, there is a shared understanding that knowledge is contextually bound, not that it only exists within the mind or perception (Franklin, 1996). In epistemological discussion, a number of writers place constructionism under the umbrella of *constructivist hermeneutics* as a branch perspective (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Horn, 1998). Social constructionism is based on emphasising the belief that social processes shape individual minds and social constructivism emphasises the premise that individual minds shape social processes (Horn, 1998). This difference is largely semantic in that the underlying premise must be that social processes influence individuals and are influenced by individuals. The question is the degree of emphasis placed on agency.

Logical positivism followed the Cartesian view of the world "*Cogito, ergo sum*" or "I think therefore I am" and, therefore, logically the thinker exists, denoting the certainty of an external world. The interpretivist tradition and its latter expression of constructivism are more uncertain at their core. Rather than the certainty of external, objective knowledge, constructivism argues for "I think, therefore I think I am". In other words, constructivism places the knower as a subjective entity in the process of knowledge acquisition and creation.

Feminism shares a similar concern for the central role of the knower in knowledge creation. The values and beliefs of the knower are seen as inseparable from the research process (Schwandt, 1994). It is fundamental to feminist standpoint theories that knowledge cannot be separated from the knower. Inseparable from the knower is the notion of gender as a socially created concept that has an overriding influence over how women come to know and understand their world and how this view is affected by the social construction of women's lives. Feminist thinkers challenged the patriarchal perspectives of the enlightenment and of logical positivism where knowledge was perceived to be the domain of men of appropriate class, race and culture (Harding, 1992). This stance is similar to that of constructivism where it is accepted that knowledge has a social context. *Critical theory* advances this stance to take account of how one community of "knowers" can be advantaged over another.

Critical theory argues that knowledge of the world is constituted as a "virtual" reality that is shaped by "social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.109). In critical theory, knowledge is constituted as a contested domain of competing knowledge claims based on the interests of competing social groups. It is a view that is divergent from the

epistemology of constructivism that is relativistic and arguably purely subjective and ultimately individualistic (see Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.109 for a succinct summary of the major principles of each paradigm). Critical theory argues that knowledge cannot be removed from the values of the knower and that values represent an important part of a contested domain where partial interests may be served. Feminism requires an overriding concern for the interests of women.

The ontology of feminism is partially relativistic but it combines relativism with critical, historical realism. *Feminist standpoint theory* argues that women's experience is locally and specifically constructed but that it intersects with an historical, political reality that has been created in a socio-historical context (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.109, Table 6.1). In this sense, feminist standpoint theory can be summarised as both constructivist and critical. The socio-historical context is one that has limited and prescribed women's ability to contribute to knowledge building. Feminism deconstructs women's lived experiences in terms of the socio-historical context and renders patriarchy visible, thereby facilitating the empowerment of women and effecting social change.

Rather than become embroiled in the dichotomy represented by positivism on the one hand and interpretivism on the other, feminist research argues that research must above all be emancipatory. Feminists argue that both positivist and interpretivist social science may deny the political aspects of knowledge and by doing so ignore the social power exerted by mainstream research (Acker, 1991). This is an important defining distinction of the feminist perspective, because it means that a multi-paradigmatic approach is possible and consequently that the use of multiple methods is possible. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, it is argued, are capable of producing research which is biased towards the interests of dominant sectors in society (Oakley, 1999).

Inherent in the acceptance of a multi-paradigmatic approach and one that allows for the use of multiple methods is the acceptance of different kinds of reasoning. The reasoning required of logico-positivism was strictly deductive in the sense that experimental research was designed to test *a priori* knowledge (Hughes, 1990). The requirement of strictly interpretivist positions was the use of inductive reasoning or allowing the research to speak for itself; to draw theoretical understanding from the research rather than impose already acquired hypotheses. Again, rather than privilege one kind of reasoning over another and subscribe to another dichotomous stance, the feminist approach has been to recognise both kinds of reasoning in a holistic fashion (Fook, 1996). This stance allows for the combination of the historical realism of critical theory and also the constructivist stance of

revealing, socially-constructed realities. The overriding concern in regard to the choice of methodology for feminism is to effect social change and this is more likely to be achieved through giving voice to women's experiences and to express these in a collective way.

5.2.3 *Giving voice to women's experiences.*

Since feminism rests on the understanding that many issues relevant and important to women were ignored in traditional research, feminist research has sought to explore topics that reflect issues of concern to women (Cosgrove & McHugh, 2000). This has reflected the symbiotic relationship with the political/social movement of feminism that sought to highlight and politicise particular issues. The greater awareness of the effects of the victimisation of women for example, has opened up an area of research promoted by the feminist movement.³⁵ Statistical measures alone would not have been able to capture the extent of the individual harm experienced by women in abusive relationships. Feminist research has sought to allow women who have been rendered powerless to express their experience and thereby illuminate the effects of domestic violence so that public policy makers would also respond at an emotional level. Similarly, the concern of the second wave of feminism with women's rights generated the belief in women's right to equal opportunity in all aspects of their lives. The feminist movement's opposition to rape and the notion of rape in marriage led to the legislative reforms of the 1980s and 90s in western democracies that began to protect the position of women as equal partners in all aspects of a marriage-type relationship. It was the process of giving voice to the many women who had been victims and survivors of abuse that enabled the community to realise the extent and depth of the problem and its longstanding effects. The revelations of this experience at an individual level constituted part of a collective and collaborative effort of women to bring these issues to public attention.

At an individual level, there has also been the contention that because women's individual voices had been suppressed in the past, this had created a climate of fear and distrust by women of traditional academic hierarchies and of research cultures (Mies, 1991). Thus, there developed an alternative theoretical position based on the premise that women had alternative ways of knowing that were embedded in their previously prescribed roles. Patriarchal society had expected women to manage social relationships, to nurture and to maintain familial connections in the domestic sphere.

³⁵ The New Zealand Women's Refuge Collective has contributed to government policy and research on domestic violence and promoted research in this area.

Women then argued that as a consequence, women had developed a distinctly different moral voice based on their relational strengths. This meant that they mutually shared a greater concern for the “ethics of care and responsibility in relationships” (Gilligan, cited in Cosgrove, & McHugh, 2000, p.820).

This notion of “a woman’s voice” was not intended to mean that the disparity between men and women in terms of relational strength was necessarily fair or equitable, but that it reflected a form of historical, gender conditioning. It was also not intended that it was not possible for men to share a feminist viewpoint (Fonow, & Cook, 1991). The process of emancipation was intended to allow women to become aware of this conditioning and to build on its strengths rather than render it invisible and deny its existence.

Oakley argues that whether women have a different way of knowing is debatable, and her preference is to acknowledge different social ways of knowing that might be influenced by a range of different social factors (Oakley, 1999). On the one hand lies the perennial difficulty in ceding to a larger “social” way of knowing which is to deny the significant impact of gender in determining social relations. On the other hand lies the problem of essentialising a form of femininity that can be seen as inherent. This dichotomy can be avoided if women’s voices are understood in a constructive sense, as representing pluralities of perception rather than a singular voice. It can also be avoided by an historical, critical perspective that takes account of relative social power and the influence of dominant groups. Within this context, it can be argued that recognising the differential social place of women historically, that in turn led to a different perception of the world, does not mean to say that this is an immutable way of knowing. Women’s ways of knowing are therefore likely to change in response to changes in their status and role in society. The belief that knowledge is context bound and constituted of multiple, constructed realities means that it is not possible to make enduring generalisations and subscribe to immutable concepts.

The associated problem of essentialising a women’s way of knowing, that of ignoring diverse groups of women with different degrees of social marginality, can also be resolved by referring to historical, critical realism. Recognising the different social locations of women where different layers of oppression may be experienced enables a more complex understanding of women’s ways of knowing that can encompass ethnicity and class. Such an understanding, similar to constructionism, locates gender not as an inherent characteristic but as a social construct. Despite

this relativity, the feminist collective voice is one that requires that the issue of gender relations is maintained as central to understanding the position of diverse women's groups in society. In other words, a woman from a minority culture may well experience gender oppression as well as racial and class oppression. Feminist, critical theory would expect that women's emancipation included class and racial emancipation.

The principles of emancipation and empowerment of women are achieved through collaboration. Collaboration "includes the researcher as a person" and facilitates the development of "special relationships with the people being studied" (Reinharz, 1992, p.240). A collaborative stance places the researcher in a partial position of recognising social disadvantage in the first place and then aligning with the position of the participant group. This requires that consequent research is a collaborative effort where the researcher works alongside participants enabling their voices to be heard. Such an approach is similar to the social work values that require a commitment to beneficence rather than maleficence. The requirement of New Zealand social workers to liberate "individuals and groups from repressive and underprivileged living conditions" means a commitment to empowerment (ANZASW, 1993, p.6). However, the difference of the feminist collaborative approach is that empowerment is not expected to be a process of the intellectual or professional expert determining, in a condescending way, how to emancipate the oppressed. Rather, the feminist collaborative approach expects the participant group to self determine their emancipation with the assistance of the knowledge and expertise of the researcher (the researcher-or experts 'on tap' rather than 'on top'). This requires establishing what the needs and goals of the participant group are before assuming what these might be. Adopting collaborative methods follows on from the egalitarian notion of empowerment. Collaboration offers a means by which feminist research can remain accountable to the participants in the research. Collaboration can also enable other voices than the researcher's to be heard, thus facilitating the possibility of social change.

5.2.4 *Using research as a tool for social change.*

There is wide agreement among feminist writers that social change is a purpose and expectation of feminist research (Crowley & Himmelweit, 1992; Fonow & Cook, 1991; Olesen, 1994; Reinhartz, 1992). The feminist critique would remain an ineffectual effort without a concomitant commitment to produce social change. The difference within feminism lies in the degree of social change sought and how this may be achieved. A liberal-feminist approach seeks to gain recognition of the impact

of social policy on women (Fonow & Cook, 1991). The radical-feminist purpose is to transform patriarchy thereby achieving the emancipation of women in all aspects of social life. The radical approach may involve outright public protest and direct political action, whereas a liberal approach requires working through and within existing social institutions. Both positions on the political continuum have the aim of advancing the situation of women.

The action orientation of feminist research requires attending to the implications of the research for social change from the inception of the project to its completion. The process of participating in women's lives carries with it an obligation to have concern for their interests and to advance these in a number of ways throughout the research. If, for example it becomes apparent in the process of interviewing a group of women that they have an immediate need that may be met by an action of the researcher, and that this action may advance the situation of the group, then it is incumbent on the researcher to find a means to meet this need.

In addition to attending to an expressed immediate need it will be incumbent on the feminist researcher to analyse the research findings in terms of how to ameliorate in other ways the social problems they have explored. The purpose of other kinds of action will be to achieve "social justice for women" (Olesen, 1994, p.158). There are a number of actions that a researcher may take in order to achieve social change. These will usually require analysis of individual situations and circumstances in terms of their social policy and social movement implications. This analysis of the interface between private issues and public policy as the basis for social action is similar to that of social work (Dietz, 2000; O'Connor, Wilson, & Setterlund 1994). In much the same way that critical feminism demands that the researcher challenge all forms of oppression, social work demands a similar commitment (Dietz, 2000). Where social work researchers enter into people's lives there is an implied responsibility to contribute to addressing revealed inequalities and social distress. The difference here is that feminist praxis is embedded in achieving social justice primarily for women as a historically disadvantaged group.

Another research perspective that shares similar feminist and social work principles is that of *action research* where the focus of the study is to produce social change (Small, 1995). Like feminist research, action research does not subscribe to a prescribed methodology, a selection of methods may be employed and methodology may change during the course of the inquiry (Small, 1995). As with feminism, action research places a high priority on collaboration with participants with the

understanding that participants are “experts” in their own lives and bring their practical knowledge to the situations being studied. Action researchers deal with unique problems and circumstances that may require innovative and new techniques for gathering data. A fixed methodology would make this responsiveness to the participant group difficult to implement. Recent feminist researchers recommend similar innovation and responsiveness for future feminist research (Cosgrove & McHugh, 2000; Fonow & Cook, 1991; Hill, Bond, Mulvey & Terenzio, 2000; Reinhartz, 1992). The ability to be responsive to the needs of the participant group departs from positivist, mainstream notions of objectivity that impose a fixed methodology that participants must comply with. This responsiveness means that the researcher needs a flexible and eclectic approach that allows for the use of multiple methods where the needs of the participant group are recognised as important.

There are many ways that social action may be achieved. The commitment to select research topics that are important to groups of women and that may lead to the advancement of women is necessary at the inception of a feminist social research project. In some instances this may mean that the researcher’s sole purpose is to render visible a set of problems that hitherto had been overlooked or ignored. However, change is not likely to occur if research reports rest on library shelves for years and are not translated in some way into social action. Such studies may contribute to other academic research in complementary fashion by contributing to theory building. However, this would not necessarily alter the lives of ordinary women in any way. Other kinds of outcomes are needed if the research is to contribute to social change.

Whilst social action is a necessary requirement of feminist research practice, the degree and nature of social change that might ensue are problematic to assess and measure (Hill, Bond, Mulvey & Terenzio, 2000). The research process itself may be able to achieve a degree of empowerment for a group of women through offering a means to express their thoughts and feelings. The research experience may be able to offer the legitimisation of life experience so that participants feel affirmed in their particular situations. This may be particularly effective with groups of women who feel disempowered through the stigma attached to their social place and they may then have sufficient confidence to effect individual change. However, this is a haphazard kind of change that relies on uncertain effects unless the researcher provides a means of feedback for the participant group. Action that is initiated through the research and that is directed at social policies affecting the group concerned will be more obvious in terms of results.

There may be a variety of kinds of policies that affect the individual situations of women participants that may be influenced or changed as a result of intervention by the researcher. These may range from administrative policies that may be found to be inequitable at social service agency level to macro-national policies that determine levels of income support and maintenance. Participants may describe negative interactions with a range of individuals and agencies and this may have implications for micro agency practice. Likewise, positive interactions may well be useful for agencies to be able to assess so that they may build on the strengths of current practice. Informing participants of the possible uses of the research in this way is necessary in the informed consent procedures so that participants themselves understand that social action might ensue from the research. The key responsibility of the researcher is to ensure that as much as possible, such action has the desired effect in achieving empowerment. The social policy process itself is fraught with potential pitfalls for the unwary and politically unaware (Wilkes & Shirley, 1984). For this reason, social action requires the researcher to have some understanding of the social policy environment impacting on the lives of participants. The commitment to social change makes feminist research a potentially conflictual and controversial arena where the status quo is likely to be challenged. It is, therefore, an arena that may carry some personal risk to the researcher and the participants where orthodox opinions and practices are questioned.

5.2.5 *Recognising the social place of the researcher*

The feminist and constructivist view that knowledge is socially constructed also means that the knower and a community of knowers reside in a socio-cultural context (Morawski, 1997). The knower is not an objective and disassociated mind intervening in the dislocated minds of others. Indeed, feminist standpoints expect that there is “careful, public scrutiny of the inquirer’s history, values and assumptions” (Schwandt, 1994, p.128). This is so that all the agents in the research process are socially located. The aim of this approach has a number of functions in feminist research. It acts theoretically, as a potential way of protecting the interests of research participants. By being explicit about the researcher’s values, the reader is enabled to gauge the motivation for the research and what other interests may be served, particularly if funding agencies are involved. It assists with the assessment of whose interests the researcher may serve.

Knowing the history and values of the researcher assists the reader to understand the decisions and actions that were taken throughout the research process from selection of research topic to the

completion. This is similar to the inquiry methodology of constructivism where the knower's self-awareness is expected to be an explicit part of the reporting of research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The additional expectation of feminist standpoints is driven by the historical, critical realism that this perspective combines with constructivism. This means that the personal history of the knower needs to explain where the researcher fits within the wider socio-political context. This places the researcher within the community context of what constitutes feminism and helps to explain what contribution the research may make to feminism as a social movement. More recent developments in feminist research recommend that writers include "autobiographical material that reveals the socio-political agenda of the researcher" (Cosgrove & McHugh, 2000, p.828). It is suggested that this helps to clarify the "context for the research questions asked, the interpretations made and the conclusions drawn" (Cosgrove & McHugh, 2000, p.828). Researchers need to be willing to share with the reader their relevant personal history coupled with analysis of feminist dialectics and this involves a degree of confidence and openness on behalf of the researcher.

5.2.6 *Reflexivity*

The means by which the knower is placed interactively in the research and responds to and analyses research events is by a process of continuing contemplation or critical reflection. Using reflexivity is a means to achieve the integrity and trustworthiness of the research in terms of its feminist aims. It is the means by which the reader is able to assess the values that the researcher has implemented throughout the research process. The values relate to feminist aims and can only be assessed if they are explicit in the account.

To be able to interpret the significance of the research an account of both the investigator and the investigated is required (Dallimore, 2000). This interpretation requires self-reflection and commentary about how personal values, histories, and positions influence the researcher. Such an approach expects a high degree of self-awareness and also the ability to analyse the challenges that the process of research presents. Critical reflection means constantly checking the information received and shared against the wider socio-political and cultural implications of the research.

The reflexivity of feminist social research is similar to that which is expected of constructivist and constructionist research. The relative social constructions of both the knower and the participants in

research are no more or less privileged than the other (Sarbin & Kitsuse 1994). What is important is that the researcher reports multiple “conversations” in the research so that the diversity of social constructions is represented (Steier, 1991, p.6). Rather than follow a fixed set of categories that determines what data are collected by the researcher in predictive fashion, constructivist and feminist research entail trying to see how pre-conceived categories do not fit. In this way, the researcher can de-privilege prior knowledge and the research class by facilitating the development of new categories. The process of reflexivity allows for the deconstruction of the known categories in terms of where they originate from and why they have been selected by previous researchers as important. This can be likened to peeling away the source of prior categories so that they can be weighted and explained in a holistic fashion. The holistic view will then allow for various categories from various sources to be weighted and analysed according to the paradigm from which they originate. In the case of criminal re-offending, prior research about the causes of women’s offending may suggest psycho-biological reasons or sociological reasons for women’s offending according to the persuasion of the writer/researcher. A reflexive approach will involve critical analysis of different paradigms so that categories are considered within their paradigmatic context. The researcher maintains an ongoing dialogue with this body of research that connects with the data originating from participants (Steier, 1991).

The issue of relative power is integral to feminist critical reflection. The traditional scientific enterprise where information gathering is controlled by the researcher is rejected and participants are able to influence the course of the research (Gergen & Gergen, 1991). Since the relative powerlessness of women is a central concern of feminism, feminist research is aimed at reversing traditional positions of power. Analysis of differential power relations and concomitant subordinations distinguishes feminism from constructivism (Locher & Prugl, 2001). Whilst constructivism delineates different social places, feminism focuses strongly on hegemony and hierarchy in the maintenance of differential power. The way that power is expressed in the research process is a significant consideration for feminist scholars and reflexive thinking is a tool for clarifying issues of power.

The use of language to describe the relationship between researcher and participants is significant in reflexive processes. Language that reinforces patriarchal power is avoided and challenged and other language forms are used to express egalitarian notions of power. Hence, the term “participants” rather than “respondents”, “objects” or “subjects” as an indicative term for the relationship between

the various actors in the research. Critical reflection requires a constant awareness of the effects of language and the effects of meanings.

The significance of semantics and their deconstruction in feminist reflexivity is similar to deconstruction in postmodern critical analysis. Quite how postmodern philosophy has intersected with and cross-fertilised feminist thought is an interesting question. Postmodernism, it has been argued, sits outside academic disciplines or different paradigms as a type of meta-theory that has had far-reaching and widespread effect (Mantilla, 1999; Marcus, 1994). Postmodernism is a philosophy that has impacted widely on the arts, architecture, philosophy and other social science disciplines (Mantilla, 1999). Describing post-modernism as a meta-theory is a contradiction in terms because of postmodernism's opposition to grand narratives or universalisms (Ahmed, 1996; Epstein, 1999; Mantilla, 1999). The opposition to generalised narrative or explanation renders postmodernist theory susceptible to a solipsistic devolution of ideas where knowledge becomes made up of a multitude of individual texts. The difficulty for social scientists and particularly for feminists, with perpetual deconstruction of knowledge, is its tendency to paralyse research. The feminist goal of advancing the situation of women already assumes a number of value judgements and assumptions about the marginality of women as a whole that runs contrary to the logical extremes of postmodern thinking. Some feminist writers eschew the extremes of postmodern solipsism for critical theory and argue that it is not possible to fully subscribe to postmodernism (Epstein, 1999; Mantilla, 1999). Indeed, Epstein goes as far as to suggest that postmodern theory offers a convenient way for academics to avoid committing to notions of social justice and empowerment of marginalised groups (Epstein, 1999). This paralysis is brought about by the inability to advantage one set of interests over another.

In terms of reflexivity and the constant self-analysis of values and social power required of feminist researchers, postmodern reflexivity has differing demands. It is arguable that feminist social science along with other social science disciplines had for many years been challenging dominant discourse and the power of language within those disciplines (Denzin, 1994). In other words, feminist social science had already developed a reflexive approach before reflexivity came to be associated with postmodernism (Denzin, 1994).

What postmodern theory has offered has been the ability to continue the process of deconstruction of any further developed theory. Thus, where feminism developed a set of beliefs during its second

wave as a social movement, postmodern theory has arguably assisted with the third wave of feminist thinking that has focused more on diversity. However, critical theorists could also argue that the shift of focus to African-American women, to lesbians and to women of other minority cultures has been part of a process of increasing recognition of different kinds of oppression and marginality. The difference is that critical feminist theory recognises collectivities of women denoted by their relative social power.

Feminist reflexive thinking requires a constant awareness of layers of multiple oppression and marginality that may be experienced by groups of women. In the case of women who have served a prison sentence, the stigma associated with this experience may be combined with prostitution, lesbiansim or belonging to a minority culture. However, unlike postmodern theory, the feminist approach is to adopt a value stance in relation to the oppression and marginality explored. It means that "The implicit values of poststructuralism [postmodernism], its celebration of difference and hostility to unity, make it particularly inappropriate as an intellectual framework for movements that need to make positive assertions about how society could be better organised, and need to incorporate difference within a collective unity for social change" (Epstein, 1999, p.43). Feminist reflexivity then, requires analysis of research experience and data in terms of the implications for social change, necessitating consideration of the political implications of the research experience as a whole.

5.3 Summary of the feminist perspective

The feminist perspective that provided guidance for this study is drawn from a review of dominant themes from the broad field of feminist social science research. The themes have been extrapolated primarily from a critical, feminist tradition. Indeed it can be argued that the challenge of antithesis is likely to be considered "radical" until such time as and if, it becomes absorbed into what is widely referred to as "mainstream" social science research. Clearly, feminist research has achieved a standing in the social sciences. The quality and strength of this standing depends on the weighting accorded it within disciplines and by individual researchers. Regardless of the individual views that may be held towards feminism, there is no doubt that a body of knowledge and research has "arrived". However, it represents a wide diversity of theories and methods within the perspective (Fonow & Cook, 1991; Olesen, 1994; Reinharz, 1992).

In terms of feminism as a social movement, this study fits within a feminist, socialist political tradition. This is not suggested in a prescriptive fashion because there may well be aspects of the study that draw from radical feminism or cultural feminism. Rather, the term “socialist” can be seen as a starting point for the socio-political values expressed in the study.

In terms of feminism expressed in social science research, the study draws from the dominant themes discussed in this section. These themes describe a complex interplay of theories that have helped to inform feminist social science research. The themes have been drawn primarily from critical and emancipatory feminist writers who have presented the strongest challenge to traditional social science research (Fonow & Cook, 1991; Harding, 1987; Hartsock, 1997; Mies, 1991; Oakley, 1999). The following section deals with how these themes and their underpinning theories went on to influence the choice of methods for this research project, and the research process itself.

Chapter Six

Methodology and the Research Process

6.1 Placing the Researcher in the Research

6.1.1 *Prison social work experience*

Practising as a social worker at Christchurch Women's Prison for nine years created a unique relationship for me with women inmates. As a social worker, I entered the prison system with a "helping" approach, that is, I was not custodial, not the police, and in terms of social work values and ethics was client-centred in my approach to working with sentenced prisoners and their families. The professional social work context of my past and current relationship with women inmates, some of whom became participants in this study, was a key influence in the research. The history that I shared with many women inmates over a period of more than nine years laid a personal groundwork for this study; personal in the sense that many women either knew me or knew of my work through our mutual involvement with the prison. In institutions where inmates are often bored and not gainfully occupied, they maintain close observation and comment on the movements and behaviour of staff. This close observation and comment also serves the purpose of informing others of what they might expect should they have occasion to deal with any of the staff. It was my experience that often inmates would already have acquired institutional wisdom about the social worker before meeting me. This might be the kind of information about what services the social worker had to offer but it would also entail some description about what kind of person I was. Within institutions that have a control and restraint function, those staff who were perceived to be over-controlling and in some cases threatening, were known to the inmates. This was particularly so in regard to those women who were incarcerated for a significant length of time. In some cases, women serving lengthy sentences came to know, through their interaction with staff, a degree of personal information about staff and their families. Whilst this interchange was understandably discouraged by managers, it nevertheless was inevitable with the kind of forced intimacy that institutions create. Christchurch Women's Prison was a small community of approximately fifty inmates and twelve staff at any one time. It was customary for inmates to convey to relevant staff their opinions about different events, communications, and day to day frustrations.

In the context of this degree of proximity, where the social work office was positioned within the “wing” areas, it was not surprising that inmates developed views about social work and about the social worker. In the majority of situations, the women very much appreciated the assistance of the social worker with the particular problems they may have had. They were sometimes very quick to convey dissatisfaction with an outcome. Whilst there is no doubt that there existed a power imbalance between inmates and professional staff, it was also characteristic of such closed prison communities that inmates were able to convey their displeasure to staff. Unlike other social work settings where agency administrative staff may act as gatekeepers and where social workers may be able to avoid “difficult” situations, in residential social work this is frequently not possible. There may be many ways that a client can express their dissatisfaction to a psychologist or social worker in the prison environment. Overall, I experienced a harmonious relationship with women inmates based upon a shared understanding of the social work role in the prison.

There was no job description that defined the social work role at the time of my appointment as the first social worker at Christchurch Women’s Prison in April, 1989. The fact that the requirements of the position developed in response to client demand meant that a client-centred service rapidly evolved. Rather than take a targeted and pre-determined approach that focused on a narrow set of needs, my role became one of generic support involving a wide array of possible interventions. Necessarily, the kinds of service that could be offered were restricted by the constraints of a highly regulated, institutional environment. Nevertheless, within those constraints it was possible to introduce a range of services that had hitherto been unavailable to the women.³⁶ The social work role that developed was primarily aimed at “humane containment” (Department of Corrections, Mission Statement, 1990) and relieving the distress brought about by the imprisonment that was experienced by both inmates and their children and families/whanau. Within the wider context of support services available at Christchurch Women’s Prison, social work became focussed primarily on the needs of women and their children and families. This wider perspective of the person fits within the ecological perspective of social work that considers a wide range of psycho-social factors impacting a person’s immediate situation (Meyer & Mattaini, 1995). Neither psychological services nor health services in the prison shared the same broad, environmental perspective. They also did not share the social work profession’s commitment to social reform and social change.

³⁶ A full description of the evolution of the social work role in New Zealand Prisons may be found in my report *Social Work in New Zealand Prisons*, 1998.

Social change for social work relates to the profession's interest in social policy as the way to effect change. Social policy is concerned with the implications of immediate micro-issues relating to individual clients and the macro-societal structures that may contribute to the individual situations of clients. In institutional environments, change may be effected through challenging existing rules and procedures where these are clearly discriminatory or potentially harmful. The private-problem/public-issue interface requires ongoing analysis of client/social worker communication in order to discern individual or endogenous factors affecting a social problem as opposed to external factors. Clearly, some external factors may be more conducive to change than others. In the prison setting, it was relatively straightforward to mediate between an inmate and a staff member, whereas there were fewer opportunities to influence legislative or regulatory change, although these did occur from time to time.

The empowerment principle of social work could be given effect by informing inmates of their entitlements and rights within prison frameworks. Social work consisted not just of assisting women to cope with the situations they faced but also to provide them with the means and opportunity to find solutions to their problems. Thus, providing information about the New Zealand Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act (1989) in regard to custody and temporary care of children enabled inmates to exercise their rights as parents.

Over the course of my nine years involvement with women inmates at Christchurch Women's Prison, there were many women who were re-incarcerated. Through an ongoing involvement with clients and their family/whanau, I was in a position to be involved for long periods of time with some clients. On at least two occasions I dealt with three generations of the same family in different prison sentences. Such a long-term overview of a family's circumstances gave me the opportunity to gain some insight into a complex array of life events contributing to women's incarceration. It became of considerable interest and concern to me that the accounts by women of their experience of release back into the community highlighted major psychosocial difficulties in terms of their reintegration. Some women described instant failure in terms of their parenting role where they were thrust back into primary caregiver roles with no recognition of the need to readjust to the demands of full parental responsibility. In many instances, women described how their children had been adversely affected by the period of imprisonment and in some cases had become angered and embittered by the separation.

This was sometimes worsened by the children's experience of prison visiting and the problems associated with limited time and contact. It is understandable that children would become frustrated at the times that their needs did not coincide with prison visiting or contact times. Certainly, my experience of the kinds of distress women described in prison reflected the experience that O'Neill described (O'Neill, 1989). O'Neill's research, which entailed in-depth interviews with a selection of New Zealand women inmates, reported that separation from dependant children caused the greatest anxiety and stress for women during incarceration. This was in many instances exacerbated by incarceration in institutions considerable distances from families and communities of origin.

In addition to the range of familial problems women encountered on release, their other consistent complaint concerned the unavailability of, and lack of access to, various kinds of social services. These services ranged from training opportunities to substance-abuse treatment facilities. Whilst I maintained some involvement with some clients after their release from prison, particularly where I had been involved with referral to various social services, the priority for social work practice was institution-based. Despite this institutional focus, I continued to be interested in, and cognisant of, the difficulties women encountered in the post-release experience.

Hence, my prison social work practice experience provided me with practice wisdom gained from dealing with a multitude of different situations and personalities in the prison environment. It exposed me to a correctional bureaucracy and the organisational knowledge and information that that entailed. Part of that bureaucratic knowledge involved official perceptions of offending and the reasons for women's incarceration. More frequently than not this meant an unwritten and informal, but nevertheless powerful, culture of beliefs about women's offending and its causes. The lack of formal research and writing about women's offending in New Zealand created a vacuum filled by anecdotal organisational explanations. Some of these may well have been based on observations and common sense, however, some were clearly based on supposition. A popular theory at one time promoted by the prison officers in the women's prison was the notion that women's offending was more devious, that women "got away with" more offending. This was attributed to women's greater ability to manipulate men, as evidenced by their apparent ability to manipulate male prison officers.

It was not just the women's prison institutions that held an abiding curiosity about women's offending, but also the wider community. It was not uncommon, once a social group learned of my role in prison life, to be asked about a particularly violent crime committed by a female offender.

Where a woman had been perceived to act in a bizarre fashion and outside social norms, the community wanted answers. Perhaps this was because it was more unsettling to consider that women were capable of such acts. My responses had to rely on the limited research and reports available at the time.

The notions of “innate badness” and of inherited “innate badness” were expressed through the opinions and actions of some custodial staff. Without research, it was perhaps understandable that staff working in prisons resorted to simplistic explanations for criminal behaviour. The only assessment tools for assisting prison staff to gain some understanding of an inmate’s reasons for offending in the early to mid-1990s were based on research about male offenders in other countries.³⁷

These early assessment tools became replaced in 2001 by the Integrated Offender Management system that involved a lengthy psychometric test of likelihood of re-offending.³⁸ The factors deemed to be associated with re-offending were based on the criminogenic needs outlined in Part Two of this study.

A gender gap remains in terms of the research and information used to inform the assessment procedures of the Department of Corrections, a gap that was referred to thirteen years ago, in the 1989 Review of New Zealand Prisons, as a lack of interest by scholars in this country “in the conditions and forces shaping women’s imprisonment” (*Te Ara Hou*, 1989, p.153).

Despite the lack of information and knowledge about women’s offending, decisions were made and continue to be made about how to treat individual offenders based on the limited information available. Whilst the most comprehensive recent research about New Zealand female offenders highlights some similarities with their male counterparts, it also suggests differences that require further exploration (Moth & Hudson, 1999).

As a professional practising in the criminal justice system and involved for some time in decisions about inmates’ access to various privileges and programmes, it was of ongoing concern to me that

³⁷ The then Department of Justice’s General Assessment Form was introduced in 1991 and was used as the base for assessment of risk of reoffending until the introduction of the Integrated Offender Management System in 2001.

³⁸ Integrated Offender Management and the Community Probation Service, Department of Corrections, 2000b.

those decisions needed to be based on reasonable grounds. I did not consider it sufficient to assume that women were similarly motivated to men in terms of their offending. The disparity between numbers of men and women offending, and in patterns of offending, belied any such assumptions. This was aside from the growing practice knowledge I was acquiring through my social work in the prison. I was acutely aware, for example, of the distress caused to women and their children by their separation.

The limited ability of a primary caregiver to be able to settle her children down in a three-minute telephone call was in some cases damaging to both parent and child. Where a child or young person was particularly affected by a mother's sudden absence, this caused considerable hardship. The caregivers "outside" the prison faced the prospect of picking up the daily routines and care requirements of children who in some cases were complete strangers to them. There has been international concern expressed about the care of prisoners' children at the point of arrest and throughout the period of imprisonment (Action for Prisoners' Families report, 2003³⁹; Beckerman, 1998; Lilburn, 2001). There appears to be a paucity of information about the welfare of prisoners' children. On at least two occasions I was required to locate support and care for children left unsupervised after their mother's arrest. In one instance, this involved five children under the age of fourteen years. Shortly thereafter, I made submissions to the relevant government departments and to the New Zealand Commissioner for Children about the risks to some children and young people when their parents were incarcerated. This has remained an area of concern based on my practice experience. More recently, in response to the release of the policy on women inmates and their children (New Zealand Department of Corrections, July, 2002), I have submitted concerns to the Minister of Corrections in regard to the care and protection of children whose mothers are involved with the criminal justice system.

The question of how a mother's parenting role impacts on her offending also became of interest to me. Having children seemed to exert particular pressures on women inmates that appeared to sometimes protect them from further offending and at other times expose them to risk of re-offending. Women would speak of their intention never again to expose their children to the separation and grief of imprisonment. They would also speak of the illegal means they felt they had

³⁹ Action for Prisoners' Families (UK). Submission in Response to the Green Paper Consultation *Every Child Matters*, December 2003. This organisation advocated for the needs of prisoners' children and their families in a broad range of areas affecting them from point of arrest through to release.

to resort to in order to provide for their children, knowing that further offending increased the likelihood of further imprisonment. In other situations, women spoke with regret of the effects of their substance dependency, and how this impacted on their offending.

There is no doubt that my accumulated practice knowledge about women and criminal offending came to inform my research. However, the question may be asked as to why the situation of women prisoners and their ongoing offending came to be of such concern to me. I could have remained an administrative social worker, working within the constraints of the prison system and not attempting to advocate for social change on behalf of my clients. I could have chosen not to challenge existing regulations and procedures of the criminal justice system and focussed entirely on individual client welfare. To understand the reasons for the emancipatory and empowerment approach I adopted whilst working in the prison requires looking further back to the values and beliefs that I brought with me to the prison environment.

6.1.2 Family background

My family background that shaped my early opinions and values introduced me to prisons and prisoners in a particular way. I was from early days influenced by Society of Friends (Quaker) notions of oppression versus emancipation. That part of Quaker history associated with the international anti-slavery movement and with concern for prison reform was taught as a part of family and religious life. Challenging systems, values and ideas was central to this education. A non-conformist religion that had its seeds in dissenting from prevailing orthodoxies and religious power produces a particular way of perceiving the world. An underpinning philosophy of social justice, along with a longstanding commitment to pacifism, guided the actions of Quakers. The Quaker Church's Public Questions Committee has had an ongoing responsibility to raise issues of public concern and to measure these against religious and humanitarian standards.

The prison system was viewed by my parents as a rigid, and in many ways outdated, way of treating criminal offending. It was not just a question of changing the attitudes of a society that approached offending in this particular way but also of providing practical assistance to those affected by prison systems. As a consequence of this practical aid, I accompanied my father who visited Mt Eden prison in Auckland, in the 1950s. The purpose of the visits was to take to the prisoners flowers that were left over from Quaker meetings for worship. I am not sure what the response of hard-bitten

prison staff and inmates would have been to this gesture. My own impression of the visit was of a dark and impressive castle-like building with many doors and locks. I only remember brief glimpses of humanity behind grilled windows. Having since worked in an institution, I can see that receiving flowers regularly may well have brightened up a boring Sunday afternoon when prisoners are for the most part locked and staff relatively unoccupied.

The other practical aid I became indirectly involved with was in providing support to the families of prisoners. This was through my father's involvement with the Wellington Prisoner's Aid and Rehabilitation Society. During the 1960s he visited and supported the families of prisoners and I accompanied him on some of these visits. As a result, I came to see families' of prisoners as ordinary people often faced with insurmountable difficulties, including the costs of separation from a loved one. There were limited financial supports available to single women with partners "inside" compared with today, and they had to rely heavily on community agency assistance. To me, the definitions of who constituted offender and victim became blurred. The mothers and children left to fend for themselves seemed to experience great hardship and this raised the question for me about the nature of imprisonment as a punishment. The onus of supporting a partner in prison and keeping the family functioning, fell on people with already limited resources. It was not uncommon in dealing with families of prisoners to find that other family members were also in trouble with a variety of authorities or that they had served prison sentences. It seemed particularly difficult for mothers to be able to deal with their adolescent children while their partners were "inside", with young people showing signs of rebelliousness and anger in their family situation.

My later experience of working with inmates and their families confirmed my earlier impression that the problems of criminal offending seemed to be complex and not readily explicable by focussing on single explanations. Each situation presented different configurations that might be associated with reasons for offending. I have met very few women offenders who have disclosed their intentional harming of others; rather, the majority have recounted life experiences of hardship and deprivation. It was not just my own experience that confirmed this but also the Court and Probation files that followed women through the criminal justice system. Presentence reports and accompanying assessments by and large told stories of abuse and neglect. It is hardly surprising to me that after learning about some of their life experiences some women commit crimes and sometimes violent crimes. Rather, it is surprising that society does not expect such crimes occur

given life histories. New Zealand has focussed on the tragic death of James Whakaruru⁴⁰ from horrific neglect and abuse. Commentators have not considered what might have occurred had he survived. The irony is that if James had gone on to commit a violent crime his background of abuse may well have been minimised or disbelieved in the desire to punish him for his own actions.

The combination of my own family background and my social work experience, gave me a set of values and ethics that were applied to my work with prison inmates. In terms of social science research, I had acquired what may be considered an “insider’s” view of prison institutions and of prisoners’ lives. The term “insider” here denotes the fact that I was employed inside a prison institution in a unique role that was supportive of inmates’ needs but required working with prison officers and administrators. The notion of “insider”, “outsider” status has been conceived as problematic in that frequently individuals are positioned differently according to their sub-group status (Acker, 2000). In another sense it could be argued that I belonged to the subgroup of “women” along with the majority of employees in the women’s prison. However, within the prison environment there existed various other sub-groups such as officers, Maori women (offenders and staff), and professional staff, characterised by “insider”/ “outsider” perspectives. My own position could be characterised similarly as being “insider” or “outsider”, dependent on where I felt I belonged and how others perceived my position.

The advantage of my prison role and experience at the time of embarking on this research was the prior knowledge this provided of the field. The risk attendant on such intimate knowledge of the research field was the influence of prior learning and how this might affect decisions and choices in the research process. The awareness of the exposure I had had in both social work practice and in professional writing and research about offending influenced my choice of methods for this project. In terms of the need to be aware of bias and how various biases might influence the research, I chose a multi-method approach that combined both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. This choice was primarily driven by the desire to explore the research topic in a comprehensive fashion and in ways that could offer new and perhaps contrasting insights into the problem of women’s re-offending. Rather than view insider versus outsider perspectives as mutually exclusive, I preferred to perceive them as on a continuum that facilitates the exploration of different aspects of the same phenomena (Christensen & Dahl, 1997).

⁴⁰ The New Zealand Commissioner for Children investigated and reported on James’ death from gross physical abuse, in June, 2000.

In the area of criminal re-offending it is likely that formal, outsider views will have impacted on both participants and the researcher. Notions about criminal re-offending are applied throughout the presentence and Court phase of criminal sentencing. They are also applied to the treatment of prisoners in terms of what is deemed to warrant programmes to address re-offending. It can be expected that some terminology used to express particular theories about offending will be shared between the actors in the criminal justice process. Other language may constitute “insider” terms that are informal and used by offenders themselves. Practitioners in criminal justice soon become familiar with a lexicon of colloquial expressions used by offenders to describe parts of the system. The term “old lagger” for example is one, which denotes someone who has had a longstanding relationship with Courts and prisons. Other language will be official and formal and denotes particular phases and aspects of the criminal justice process. The term “impulsivity” in explanatory arguments in Court denotes a set of forensic knowledge and assumptions about the behaviour of offenders.

The assessment process in New Zealand to which all offenders are likely to be exposed, in terms of establishing how to treat their offending, raises explanatory ideas. Whether this represents what has actually occurred, or whether it represents a particular perspective about what has occurred, is debatable. It is possible that offenders and officials talk past each other in the sentencing process. Common sense suggests that there is a degree of understanding reached by the participants in the process about the use of terms and their meaning. My own experience in the Women’s Prison was that many women wanted to understand what was being said about them by way of explanation. Important decisions hinged on how offending was explained. It was in their interest to know a little about what was being said to the Judge and to be able to respond. What a woman might then say to a friend in an adjoining prison cell would be likely to differ markedly from the formal setting.

What this discussion serves to show is that both “insider” and “outsider” perspectives and different sub-cultures may contribute to understanding and knowledge about women’s re-offending. Rather than characterise one as objective and the other as subjective, they can both be seen as part of a complex web of different kinds of knowledge. Neither form of knowledge may be superior to the other but both are necessary for a full appreciation of the phenomena concerned. To deny either one may be to deny the possibility of new insights through unrecognised sources of knowledge.

6.2 Multi-method Research: Combining Stories and Numbers

The choice of a feminist, multi-method approach was made to ensure that I investigated the topic fully. Reinharz has described this aspect of multi-method research as a “quest for truth” (1992, p.211). It enables the researcher to acknowledge her prior knowledge and to incorporate a variety of techniques and methods that allows for the research topic to be fully explored in a number of ways. It enables prior knowledge to be tested and re-formed on the basis of applying different perspectives to the same topic. A rich tapestry of information may be acquired that avoids simplistic explanations. Multiple methods facilitate responsiveness to the field of chosen research where methods may be abandoned or incorporated in response to field experience (Hill, et al., 2000).

The inclusion of “contextual data” (Reinharz, 1992, p.208) offers the possibility of alternative perspectives of the research topic. It means that the role of organisations and communities in explaining social phenomena may be taken into account. In relation to criminal offending, a significant amount of personal information is gathered and held by official agencies dealing with offenders. Such information can supplement the contemporary information that participants provide and can add the agency or official perspective in dealing with the person concerned. It needs to be considered in terms of its parameters but also in terms of what it may add to the breadth of the data. In the treatment of offenders, a number of social agents are likely to have had interactions with women offenders. Individuals in the Probation service and social service agencies are likely to have formed opinions about their clients and about women’s offending. In some cases, such knowledge may have been acquired over many years and has the potential to add an historical and “informed expert” view of the topic area. In the pursuit of purist objectivity, such informed experience may be discounted because of potential biases. However, if it is accepted, as it is in social constructivism, that all knowledge has a socially constructed context, the information that informed experts in the field have to contribute may be considered in terms of the organisational influences that are likely to have helped shape those views and opinions. The advantage of talking to key individuals who have worked with women offenders is the ability to consider a range of organisational and other cultural perspectives. Arguably, this has the potential to increase reliability and validity because a range of different views has been included in the data rather than excluded at the outset.

Informed experts may themselves represent a range of collective views about criminal offending. An expert who is a feminist, and also lesbian, may have a particular perception of her women clients

and explanations for their offending. In this instance, the role of sexual orientation and its social consequences may influence the individual's view. A male Probation Officer may have acquired a different perception of women's offending, one that at no time considered women's sexual orientation as impacting on their behaviour. Selecting informed experts at the outset who represent a cross-section of gender, culture and social experience enables a variety of perspectives to be considered.

The choice of multiple methods has been described by Berman et al. as building an understanding based on combining stories and numbers (Berman, Ford-Gilboe & Campbell, 1998). Descriptive statistics assist the researcher to construct a picture based on a common set of "facts". Those facts then help to distinguish the group of participants from the population at large. Otherwise, the data remain amorphous and without meaning. Numbers may be present in official data and in other organisational information in the form of general statistics about the group selected for study or about the nature of the social phenomena under investigation. They are useful as a part of the context of data available to the researcher. In the criminal justice field, there are a variety of sources of statistical information collected that reflect society's concern with offending and with the costs of offending to the community. The Prison Census data alone provide a wealth of information about prison populations in ways that are not necessarily applied to other social groups. Such official data has helped to inform the description of the group of participants in this study and also to provide a longitudinal perspective to the phenomena of criminal re-offending.

Statistical programmes constitute another set of "numbers" that may inform the phenomena being investigated. Berman et al., argue that having both quantitative and qualitative methodologies increases the opportunity to "yield the most persuasive evidence to bring about change" (Berman et al., 1998, p.4). A number of feminist writers also refer to the value of applying both methodologies so that the research "speaks" to the predominant socio-political context of the research (Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991; Oakley, 1999; Reinharz, 1992). Quantitative techniques offer another way of treating the data. Having come from a position of professional practice with women offenders, it was of concern to me that I already had preliminary opinions formed about the subject. The notion of adopting research techniques that created distance between the subjectivity of the researcher and the data itself was attractive. It was also attractive given the personal knowledge that I was likely to have in relation to some of the participants. This is not to say that qualitative research cannot achieve reliability. However, in social work practice much of my opinion had been formed after

extensive qualitative involvement with clients in some cases. This had led to the growth of practice wisdom and knowledge in a particular way. It appeared to me that the choice of both methods would enhance my ability to explore the research topic with a variety of techniques that would offer different perspectives.

I also wanted to ensure that the techniques that I used were “user-friendly”. Building on my prior knowledge of working with women inmates, I had become aware of their difficulty with completely open questions. My experience in practice had shown that women inmates became more comfortable and felt less threatened if they had some structure and guidance in interviews. Many women inmates had left school either prior to secondary schooling or in the third or fourth forms. Their lack of confidence and different language skills meant that they often had difficulty expressing themselves. I found in practice that semi-structured interviews helped women to become comfortable and feel more able to respond. My experience suggested that leading up to more open qualitative questions was a more useful strategy.

The other advantage of my approach to the semi-structured interviews was the establishment of a context and focussing on particular aspects of life. I found that this frequently triggered women to think about not only the question itself, but also about related information. For example, in talking in specific ways about their family/whanau background, women would remember related experiences and recount them at the same time. This requires a degree of flexibility in interviewing and reflects the kind of responsiveness that I wanted to build into my research fieldwork. Strict adherence to an interview format that did not allow participants to react to the questions and to introduce their ideas at any point would, I suspect, based on my practice experience, have been an unproductive approach. In effect, what I found in working with inmates was that combining quantitative and qualitative approaches in complementary fashion, without privileging one over the other, enhanced my work. In linking that practice experience to social science research, the application of both methodologies seemed to me to enhance the potential “depth” of the information gained. In terms of making a contribution that might influence the policy environment, there was also the potential to ensure some “generalisability of results” (Hill et al., 2000, p.90). Fonow and Cook in referring to feminist values in interviewing state that “the ways in which research participants are treated and the care with which researchers attempt to represent the lived experience of research participants are of more central concern” (1991, p.90). They argue for an inclusive approach to methods with the

emphasis on achieving feminist goals and fulfilling feminist ideology. This inclusive and potentially empowering approach informed the choice of methods for this study.

6.3 Research Design

6.3.1 *The purpose of the study*

As outlined in the earlier introduction to this study, the purpose of this piece of research was to explore the factors that influence women to continue offending after release from a prison sentence, and to explore those factors that assisted them to address their re-offending. In terms of prior knowledge, the choice of methods was influenced by the intention to consider factors that have been widely reported and supported as contributing to women's re-offending. It was also influenced by the desire to explore those factors that released women themselves related to their offending or protection from offending. Canvassing these two sources of knowledge and experience required different methods that would enable both kinds to be considered.

The *a priori* knowledge constituted the wider theories and explanations for women's offending and re-offending that emerged from the literature review. It also included additional knowledge that released women themselves provided about re-offending. A significant proportion of the interview schedule was based on exploring these theories and hypotheses.

In terms of the feminist values and empowerment values underpinning the research, these dictated that the women themselves should be invited to reflect on what they perceived to be important aspects of their experiences, and, furthermore, should be given the opportunity of learning about and reflecting upon, what others considered to be important. This could be seen as a consciousness-raising exercise where this group of women would have access to, and be able to comment on, "expert" opinion about themselves. This reflexive process had, as is in the purview of qualitative research, the potential to contribute to theory and policy development. In terms of both methodologies, the journey was from the outset conceived of as collaborative between researcher and participants.

6.3.2 *The Design Model*

Employing combined methods in research design is a relatively recent development in social science research (Creswell, 1994; Creswell, 2003). This approach is still in its formative stages and different models have evolved but are by no means complete at this point in time (Creswell, Fetters & Ivankova, 2004).

In line with the desire to recognise the potential for complementarity of the data and the diverse avenues for understanding a social phenomenon offered by multiple methods, I chose a triangulated design model that would allow me to collect qualitative and quantitative data both simultaneously and sequentially, and to build on and incorporate categories and themes from the different methods in incremental fashion. Creswell et al. have outlined this model involving concurrent data collection as flowing from qualitative to quantitative (2004). The model I evolved began with qualitative consultation with released women inmates and with practitioners in the field, and then moved to a semi-structured interview with equal emphasis on qualitative and quantitative methods. The primary interviews went on to inform the additional methods of data collection that offered further extensive triangulation. These involved the secondary data from the Probation files and the interviews with informed experts. The data collection was concurrent from the point of view that the analysis was rudimentary and by no means completed before the next data set was collected. Final analysis and integration was reserved until all the methods had been employed and the data processed. Integration was to be achieved during the “results, interpretation and conclusion phase” (Creswell et al. 2004, p.5).

6.3.2 *The participant group*

As mentioned earlier, my own professional background that involved years of interaction with women inmates gave me practice knowledge of working with the wider group of women who have served sentences of imprisonment. In return, women inmates came to know me either directly or indirectly during the course of those years.

Given this background, I was particularly concerned to ensure that the involvement of the participant group was on a voluntary basis and was not attached to the expectations that my prior role might engender. This commitment was additionally based on my experience of research

projects that had been conducted with incarcerated women which I had observed whilst employed in the prison. Indeed, on some occasions I had been asked to facilitate the implementation of research by involvement in informed consent procedures. My concerns were two-fold based on my observations. First, it was not uncommon for women respondents in prison-based research to be paid for their participation. The attraction of even relatively small amounts of money was high for women who were desperate for cigarettes, for example. I was uncomfortable with the idea of inducements being used in a deprived environment where women were rendered powerless by the control of their physical conditions.

The second concern related to my experience of the artificial social environment created by the prison. If perceptions are, at least to an extent, context bound, it was inevitable that women's perceptions of their community situation might change when they were separated from their usual social and community surroundings.

Where women were imprisoned for years, discrepancies between their memories of how things had been prior to imprisonment and how they would be on release sometimes became apparent. It was the contribution of children and other family members, often in the context of Family Group Conferences⁴¹ where this distortion sometimes became apparent.

It is understandable that the need to manage and adjust to a controlled and artificial social environment might impact on women's perceptions. The implications of this for research into re-offending, particularly where family background or situation prior to imprisonment was being explored, were that the results could be more heavily influenced by a participant's prison experience.

The prison context might also exert a constraining influence over women's ability to freely respond in interviews. My experience of dealing with sensitive issues relating to staff or inmate behaviour, was the persistent fear of repercussions for women. Their suspicions of research conducted with the consent of prison officials risked inviting constrained responses.

⁴¹ A statutory procedure under the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act (1989) intended to ensure family voice in decision-making.

Such concerns led me to seek as participants for this study only those who had been released from prison. In order to interview women in a collaborative sense, it seemed to me that I had to remove the interview setting away from the institutional environment and from being overly contaminated by my association with it.

Contact with prospective participants was achieved by disseminating information about the research project through the Community Probation service, the Family Help Trust, the Prisoner's Aid and Rehabilitation Service and the Ka Wahine Trust. The information given to staff within the agencies outlined the purpose of the project and invited participants to contact me either directly or indirectly through the staff in the relevant organisation. Where the agency had waiting rooms for clients, information was provided on notice boards so that, participants could contact me directly. The staff in the agencies was without exception positive about the study and I am sure this had some influence on the participants' willingness to participate.

6.3.3 *Primary data*

The major component of this study was a semi-structured interview with the primary participants who were women who had served a sentence of imprisonment during the last seven years. The purpose in allowing a period of time to have lapsed since the last period of imprisonment was to include women participants who may have succeeded in addressing their offending. This was to enable the exploration of both protective and risk factors in relation to re-offending.

The pre-sentence and prison-based assessments women had been exposed to as a part of the incarceration process had already provided a formal estimation of what the criminal courts and judges perceived as causing their offending. The interview began with a repeat of the official measurements of re-offending as they were administered by the New Zealand Community Probation service at the time. The instruments used at the time were based on a set of criminogenic needs and risks which had been adopted from the state of Victoria in Australia.⁴²

The interview was consequently constructed as an exploration of what others had to say about offending and as an invitation to the participants to contribute their views about their offending and

⁴² Information provided by Manager, Community Probation service, Christchurch.

about offending *per se*. It also incorporated new factors based on social work practice experience that had not been previously explored in relation to women's re-offending. At least half the interview schedule was quantitative in that it asked questions that were single featured, scaled, and based on prior knowledge (Appendix 3 is the final draft of the schedule).

The research design also needed to allow for a distinction between a group of women who self-reported as non-offenders and a group who were continuing to offend. This was so that differences could be explored in terms of what factors had assisted women to address their offending as opposed to staying within offending lifestyles. The quantitative methods offered a means to make this distinction in terms of comparisons between incidence of factors and level of occurrence should the two groups emerge from the initial results.

The quantitative part of the interview began with descriptive and demographic questions in order to give some definition to the participant group as a whole. The next major part of the schedule, which was also quantitative, comprised of clusters of categories that represented factors that had been previously associated with re-offending. These categories were derived from the literature review and from the assessments of offending risk and need used in both the Department of Corrections Community Probation service and in some community organisations at the time (see Part Two for discussion concerning these factors).

The quantitative questions in the majority of categories were supplemented by qualitative questions that explored that particular category more fully. Where an initial set of quantitative questions focused on financial factors, for example, they were expanded to encompass an individual budget for each participant that assessed financial status more fully and reflected individual circumstances.

A significant proportion of the interview schedule was designed with a view to analysis using a widely accepted statistical programme (Statistica, or Stats, Soft, 1994). However, the small number of participants (being twenty-six released women, which constituted approximately a third of all women released in Christchurch over a twelve month period), could not be sufficient numbers to warrant the making of statistical generalisations. The results of analysis of the quantitative data alone from such a small group can only be seen as suggestive of possible associations between some factors over others with re-offending. Given the small participant group, I chose additional and

complementary qualitative methods that would have the potential to expand and enhance the strength of the quantitative data produced by the interview schedule.

The qualitative data had the potential to either add strength to the quantitative data or to dilute or weaken the results. The qualitative data also had the potential to introduce new areas of theory that participants might raise in response to open and reflective questions. Rather than view potential conflict in the data as a problem at the outset, I viewed such potential conflict as an opportunity that could be explored should it arise.

Berman et al. (1998) refer to the differential emphasis that may be placed on stories as opposed to numbers in research design. The emphasis in the design for this study was placed on the stories that women had to tell about their re-offending. Whilst seemingly a large proportion of the interview schedule was devoted to quantitative data, in practice the qualitative expansionary questions and the open-ended, retrospective and reflective questions that constituted the latter section of the schedule, dominated the interview.

In addition to the literature review that informed the choice of topics to be covered in the interview schedule, I considered it was important to ensure their relevance to released women's actual experience. It was also important to me to ensure that the interview design was respectful of participants and that it would offer potential insights to participants about their offending. It needed to be "user friendly" in making sense to participants. Throughout the development of the interview schedule I sought the advice and input from two released women inmates. It was important to me that the subject areas to be covered were relevant and appropriate to women's experience, and to this end, I consulted with them as informed experts, in developing the categories and the questions.

As a consequence of the literature review and the consultation, the first draft of the interview schedule was developed with 171 questions. These were clustered in factors beginning with a demographic section. The factors in the order in which they appeared were:

- Demographics
- Family background
- Cultural background
- Patterns of offending
- Contemporary family relationships

- Leisure interests
- Financial and housing circumstances
- Social support including social services
- Prison experience
- Substance abuse history
- Mental health
- Life goals
- Reflection on offending
- Reflection on social services
- Significant life events and offending
- Overall reflection on self and offending

The draft interview schedule was then tested with the two released women who had been consulted with concerning the design. They were both interested in assisting with the research and in contributing to the development of the schedule. Their response to the schedule was positive. They suggested that the exploration of family background needed to include a question about how often women had been shown affection in their family of origin. Both women described emotional deprivation as significant in their early family life. Consequently, I included a question that asked whether the participant had been “cuddled” and “shown affection”. They were particularly concerned about the practical difficulties they had encountered on release and appreciated the sections that explored these aspects.

The number of questions suggests that the interview process would be onerous and potentially exhausting. However, the majority of the questions were short answer and sets of questions applied to some participants only. For example, the relatively large section of questions on substance abuse applied only to those with dependency issues. This meant that the interview time was approximately 1.5 hours which at no time appeared taxing on the participant. The prevailing response was appreciation for the breadth of the factors. Perhaps this response may be understood within the context of inmates’ prior experience of interviews where the focus was on what official systems wanted to know about their offending rather than on what inmates wanted to say.

Overall, the feedback from the released women was invaluable in helping to ensure the applicability and appropriateness of the interview schedule. Further consultation was sought in regard to the interview schedule from experts in various fields associated with the selected categories.

6.3.4 *Secondary data*

The individual interviews to be conducted with each participant were to be supplemented by information from individual probation files. There were a number of purposes in accessing the historical files. They represented a record of women's lives that accounted for their re-offending in a particular manner. This manner was affected by the institutional nature of a large state bureaucracy and also by the individual probation officers working within it. It seemed to me that their views and the records they maintained had the potential to add to the stories of the women's lives. In some cases women may not have been involved with the criminal justice system for some years and I was concerned about how much the women could remember about their re-offending over a long period of time. "Triangulation" to other sources was one remedy.

The sensitive nature of some of the interview questions may have meant that some participants would have preferred not to re-open aspects of their offending history but to have these confirmed by official records at the time. My experience in prison indicated that sometimes women were annoyed about how often they were required to divulge personal information during the sentencing process and they referred me to the information that accompanied them into the prison.⁴³

The Probation files offered another social context within which women's offending was assessed and recorded. It represented another source of data, unique to this particular participant group. The files introduced an institutional paradigm to the stories already told by the women. I perceived the interviews with the women to be the most important source of information and the consequent data collection methods to be a means to add further dimensions to the nature of women's re-offending. The additional sources of data allowed for the consideration of other paradigms within which notions of women's re-offending may be constructed. This has been likened to the use of a paradigmatic lens through which different aspects of the same social event may be understood

⁴³ Women would arrive at the prison reception and their Court files would arrive shortly thereafter, usually within a week.

(Lewis & Grimes, 1999). This also followed the feminist research tenet of interviewing women in a way that respected the significance of their accounts (Reinharz, 1992, pp.23-45).

6.3.5 *Interviews with informed experts*

A further source of experience and knowledge of women's offending was sought from a group of seven experienced practitioners who worked with released women in a number of capacities. The selection of this group of experts was based on the contacts I had made in the process of referrals of women to various social services in preparation for release. The practitioners were chosen based on my knowledge of their extensive involvement with released women offenders. In-depth qualitative, unstructured interviews were planned that would build on the knowledge already gained from the interviews with the women themselves. These secondary interviews were to be conducted around the major clusters of factors that had become apparent from the primary interviews. Open, reflective questions constituted a major part of the interview design.

The experts were additionally selected on the basis of their knowledge of specific areas of practice in relation to women offenders. The fields of Probation, substance abuse, practical aid, residential care and sexual abuse counselling, were among those selected. In terms of the integrative approach to data collection that encompassed a range of paradigms, these interviews offered a source of data based on the practice wisdom of social service personnel. The seven selected had a combined one hundred years of experience of working with women offenders in their respective capacities.

These interviews, combined with the secondary Probation records, had the potential to provide a long-range view of working with women offenders. The contribution of each individual could not only provide an organisational perspective but could also reflect individual agency perspectives.

6.3.6 *Interview process and secondary data collection*

6.3.6.1 *The participant interviews*

Choice was given to the participants about where they might like to be interviewed. One participant chose to be interviewed at the agency she was engaged with at the time and I contributed a small amount for transport costs. The majority chose to be interviewed in their homes. A small group

chose to be interviewed at the Periodic Detention Centre (Department of Corrections) rooms and an office was made available for this purpose.

The choice of interview setting had implications for child-care and for possible interruptions. Part of the preparation for interviews involved ensuring that there was sufficient uninterrupted time for completion. A degree of flexibility was required in this regard because of the practical difficulties some women faced with family responsibilities. I also planned for the possibility of other unexpected events such as the arrival of visitors or the impact of substance use. These factors all needed to be balanced against the impact of the interview itself and planning sufficient time to pause if necessary and deal with urgent issues if they arose. Whilst I preferred not to interrupt the interview and re-schedule completion, I was aware that this might be necessary in some cases; as it transpired, this was not required.

As they proceeded, there were very few difficulties in completing the interviews and I appreciated the length to which some participants went in order to provide time for these. The majority of participants answered all the questions relevant to them. Where school age children were involved, mothers arranged to be interviewed in the afternoon giving at least two hours of their time.

I experienced difficulty with one interview where the participant was influenced by her medication taken that morning. This interview took longer than two hours because the participant fell asleep at one point. On re-awakening she was keen to continue and complete the interview despite my offering to return on a later day. On occasion her speech was a little slurred but she was insistent that she could understand and continue the interview.

In other instances, children returned home from school and were given things to do while the interview was completed. Where pre-school children were present, I paused the interview to allow mothers time to settle their children or to arrange activities for them. The majority of interviews continued for at least two hours without other major events impinging on the time. As part of the courtesy attached to visiting people in their own homes I took some food, usually a packet of chocolate biscuits or similar, in order to demonstrate my appreciation for their hospitality.

The group who chose to be interviewed and were based at the Periodic Detention Centre were given time off their duties in order to complete the interview. It was the view of staff that the interview

itself constituted a worthwhile effort and they were helpful in promoting the purpose and participation.

6.3.6.2 Response to the interview schedule

I found that my prior involvement with Christchurch Women's Prison made it easier for the participants to feel as if they had some connection with me. The visits usually began with discussion about the prison, about individual staff, and about public events or incidents that related to the prison. Frequently, participants spoke about other inmates they had seen and how their friends were coping. If a woman offender had recently been sentenced to imprisonment this also became subject of conversation.

I was sensitive at the beginning of each interview to any obvious reactions participants may have to the style of questions and to the content. I was concerned to ensure that participants were comfortable with the quantitative questions that were precise and required little extra input from them.

I found these to be a useful way to begin the interview and this confirmed my earlier experience of beginning with non-threatening and known content. The Risk and Needs forms of the Community Probation service that began the interview were already familiar to the majority of the participants. They seemed to appreciate the opportunity to understand more about the purpose of these forms and were, without exception, open about their offending history. Completing this form generated some humour from time to time particularly from women who were still categorised as being at high risk of re-offending but had not re-offended for some years.⁴⁴ Part of my preamble with them was to explain that I was exploring the whole area of women's re-offending and that the forms were, in my view, just one part of a bigger picture. I think this reassured them that their own thoughts and views would be valued as well.

The feedback to the quantitative questions was one of affirmation that I had comprehensively covered all the areas that had occurred to them in relation to their offending. Some participants responded that the questions alerted them to a range of issues that they had not previously

⁴⁴ In one case, the participant had not re-offended in five years.

considered. This was interesting to them, particularly when it came to reflecting on their life history and the factors that had influenced them during the life course.

Five of the participants felt that by the time they had reached the open reflective and narrative question at the end of the interview, they had already covered everything they needed to. They did not feel that there was anything more to add. Some women chose to elaborate on issues outside the order of the schedule and these were noted as they occurred.

Whether the five would have responded to a schedule that was qualitative only is impossible to know. It is possible that some women still felt less confident with open questions because of the relative power of our positions and the concern not to say the wrong thing. The certainty offered by prescriptive questions was the reassurance that the answers were comparatively straightforward. Perhaps this raises some issues in terms of literacy levels, and the greater confidence that some women had as opposed to others, or simply that some participants preferred certainty. The majority of participants had left formal schooling prior to, or at the age of 15 years (twenty out of twenty-six). Overall, the response to both parts of the schedule was positive.

There was a sense, in the case of one participant, that she tolerated the breadth of the questions about possible factors associated with re-offending, but that in the final analysis her view was that her efforts to change were entirely her own. She described the research as developing a:

...really big picture. You're looking at a pool and the ripples start – there's all these individuals – a lot going on inside and out – with family. I feel I'm a lucky one because I had what it took to stay out. I see it as a totally personal achievement.

Interestingly, I had not included a question that encompassed individual willpower, apart from a general question concerning motivation to change. There was a sense in which this participant appeared to tolerate the interview's reflection of so-called "expert" views about re-offending. However, her overall view was that her own determination was the deciding factor in stopping offending.

A number of the participants had been residing in the community for some years and their recollection of aspects of their criminal justice history during the interviews was affected by the

distance of time. This is where the Probation files were helpful in supplementing the information and providing detailed pre-sentence reports and judges' sentencing notes.

6.3.6.3 The Probation files

After completing the primary interviews, I then accessed the individual Probation files for each participant. The files were collected at one office in Christchurch and I had access to them over an arranged period. Space was made available to me and the staff was helpful and hospitable during my sometimes lengthy visits to the office.

Some files were still active and there were time constraints in terms of access. I used a laptop computer to record notes from the raw data as I was not permitted to photocopy the documents. The Probation data was already pre-coded in the sense that information about offenders was recorded under categories and subcategories. These were similar to those in the interview schedule and enabled me to begin to code the data in the process of my recording. I used categories such as family history, substance abuse, and employment history in order to organise the data. However, this did not preclude me from being alert to other possible factors that might be touched on in individual files. I approached these files with a critical view that was not confined to necessarily accepting the views expressed by individual Probation officers. I was particularly alert to issues that might be impacted by gender in terms of individual probation officer opinion. I found the evidence of historical changes in organisational recording methods interesting to note in regard to re-offending. On completion of my work of recording from the Probation files I arranged to interview the informed experts.

6.3.6.4 Interviews with informed experts

The interviews with informed experts were planned for the final stages of data collection so that I could build on the data already collected and treat the interviews as a reflective exercise. These interviews were recorded at the place of work of the practitioner concerned. Field notes were taken at the same time as the interview was recorded. Key questions were developed to guide the interviews that were based on my experience with the participants' interviews and with the Probation files. I had by this time, begun to acquire a sense of commonly occurring factors and themes. I had a check-list based on my earlier interviews and data recording that provided prompts

for opinion from the practitioners. I welcomed their reflections on re-offending and they were without exception forthcoming about their analyses. They impressed me with their thoughtfulness and with their efforts to understand the effectiveness of their work. The length of time that some practitioners had been employed provided an opportunity for reflection on the changes they had witnessed in their organisational contexts over time. The deductive/inductive approach employed in these interviews worked well in providing a relevant focus and in encouraging original participant contributions. I noted feedback from the practitioners in my research journal about the comprehensiveness of the issues raised.

6.3.6.5 Summary of interviews

It appeared that for some of the primary participants the structured part of the interview sufficiently covered factors that they could conceive of relating to their re-offending. For a few this meant that they felt they had nothing further to contribute to the narrative, open question at the end of the interview. For others, the quantitative section gave them a breadth of information to relate to and to try to make sense of in terms of their own lived experience. For the majority of participants, however, the quantitative isolating of factors did not reflect the interrelationship between multiple factors they identified in their lived experience. This was where the open, narrative question at the end of the interview facilitated reflection and an overview of key life events. Both methodologies contributed to different kinds of data collection that in turn required different methods of analysis. Following analysis of the data two further and final sets of interviews were planned in the design phase.

6.3.6.6 Final feedback to participants of data analysis

In accordance with the feminist, qualitative underpinnings of this study I offered each participant the opportunity to learn about the findings and to comment on these. At the time of interview each participant indicated that they were keen to participate in this follow up.

This form of collaborative accountability was envisaged as part of participant empowerment which Massat and Lundy (1997) refer to as incumbent on social work researchers to build into their practice. Dallimore (2000) refers to the need to “share the interpretation of findings with participants” (p.174) as part of the accountability of the project. Dallimore further suggests that this

is a way of increasing the generalisability of qualitative findings in that it allows for shared categories and factors to be further explored and extrapolated from the data. However, this form of generalizing depends on the majority if not all, of the participants being involved in the process.

My experience was that whilst the participants expressed willingness to be involved in this process at the time of interview, by the time that the data had been analysed a year later, they were difficult to contact. The majority of letters that were sent out inviting them to meet with me either in a focus group or individually, were not responded to or were returned, “address unknown”. The high level of transiency of this population is widely accepted in the Community Probation service as making it difficult to maintain contact, and the lack of response could not be construed as dissatisfaction with the research process. The result was that three women were individually interviewed for this final feedback session. The results of this interview are detailed in the reporting of the data analysis in the following chapter.

6.3.6.7 Peer review of data analysis

In addition to the final feedback to participants I planned a final system of peer review of the partially analysed data. My rationale for this was that once themes and categories could be discerned in the data and as I began to make sense of these, my perceptions and understandings would benefit from additional scrutiny. This was a form of peer review that Madill, Jordan & Shirley (2000) have described as adding objectivity and reliability to qualitative analysis. The themes and factors that I had extrapolated from the results of the different methods employed could be interpreted in a variety of ways and my own biases would inevitably impinge on my interpretation irrespective of how “objectively” I might view the results. In the abovementioned study, two of the authors simultaneously analysed the qualitative data from their research project. The consequent triangulation led to different aspects of the data taking priority according to the perceptions of the reviewer.

This system of peer review recognised my isolation as a sole researcher and the need to incorporate forms of collaboration and critical feedback as a means to enhance the robustness of the research. It ensured that contradictions and dilemmas as they arose in the data could be discussed with a wider group that was familiar with the difficulties of interacting as practitioners in the field of re-

offending. It also meant that different cultural identities from my own would be able to respond to the data and expand my own perceptions and understandings.

I selected three women to peer review the semi-analysed data. One was an alcohol and drug counsellor, another was a domestic violence counsellor working from a Maori perspective and the third was an academic with psychotherapy practice experience in a psychodynamic and feminist tradition. The feedback from the three peer reviewers was invaluable in raising new dimensions and aspects of the data that I had not previously discerned in quite the same way. What was interesting was the influence of different values and standpoints in interpreting the data.

6.5 Cross cultural issues

In planning the research, careful consideration was required in terms of research involving Maori women and women from other cultures. Given that this was intended to be a feminist, critical and emancipatory study, it was important to ensure that the research was not undertaken in a way that would harm Maori women, and rather, that it would be of potential benefit to them.

I was fortunate to be able to consult with Te Puna Oranga, a sexual abuse treatment and violence prevention organisation working from a Maori perspective. A member of the Te Puna Oranga collective was a Maori elder who had worked as a *kuia*⁴⁵ at Christchurch Women's Prison for some years. Other collective members had offered education and treatment services to Maori women inmates for some time. I sought their input and expertise in drafting the questions about the role of culture. The consultation took place at the Te Puna Oranga offices at a collective meeting to which I had been invited.

I determined in designing the research not to exclude the issue of culture, given that many of the participants were likely to be Maori. The research needed to take account of racism and ensure that the interview schedule did not inadvertently perpetuate forms of discrimination. This presented a dilemma in attempting to be inclusive in that it raised the issue of my being Pakeha and asking questions that pertained to Maori. The accusation of paternalism, or maternalism in this case, could be levelled at a researcher presuming to ask questions about another culture. However, discussion

⁴⁵ A *kuia* is an older Maori woman who has been accorded respect for her cultural knowledge.

with the released women in designing the research and with the consultative group of Maori women from Te Puna Oranga provided guidance in this regard.

At the meeting (hui) that I attended, the group expressed their collective view that it was appropriate to ask questions about culture as long as the interviewer was guided by a genuine concern and respect for Maori women. It would have been worse, in their view, to exclude considering these issues because of their significance. The alternative was not to interview Maori women and that would have excluded a potentially significant group of participants from the research. It was felt that it was more important to do the research, which was seen as an opportunity for women released from prison to talk about their lives and to have their voices heard. It was thought that the possible limitations of my interviewing Maori women would be offset by the fact that they knew me, knew my work and had already shared parts of their lives with me. The role as social worker at Christchurch Women's Prison had allowed me to participate in their lives and to support them. In a sense, the research process was recognising an already established relationship.

The discussion with the Te Puna Oranga collective highlighted their view that culture imbued every facet of life. In their view, ethnicity was primarily associated with identity, with how individuals perceived their associations. To separate it into a category that somehow influenced re-offending was to reduce it and demean it and had the potential to reinforce the negative connotations of "being Maori" in the style of self-fulfilling prophecies. They pointed out that Maori and Maori culture existed long before European law and prisons arrived in New Zealand. The collective felt that to focus on culture as a determinant in offending would fail to adequately explain the number of Maori women who were not part of the criminal justice system.

As a consequence of the consultation process, the way in which Maori culture was considered in relation to re-offending in this study was in terms of how Maori women experienced their culture and the kinds of cultural support and services that were available both on release and whilst in prison. Ethnicity was based on how women perceived their affiliations and was therefore self selected.

The comments of the women in the consultative group placed more emphasis on the positive influence of culture in terms of identity formation and the provision of family/whanau supportive links and networks. They spoke of their concern that the standard question on ethnicity in much

research, *“tells very little about the person”*. They stated how culture gives a sense of identity and that without it *“Maori feel they are nothing, that they don’t belong”*. In their view there needed to be a question about the quality of relationship between whanau (family) and iwi (tribe) to provide some indication of how familiar a person was with their culture. They also felt that many Maori women had replaced traditional iwi links with other intertribal whanau networks after moving into the cities. They provided a list of other kinds of cultural networks that had been significant to them ranging from sporting groups to Kohanga Reo (Maori language and culture pre-school facilities; literally, “language nests”). They felt that most urban Maori groups were based on the whanau principles of manaakitanga (helping) and aroha (love and care) across tribal boundaries. In their view, such groups could support young women with a sense of belonging. They saw the principle of whanaungatanga (maintaining family relationships) as essential in order for young women to grow. They thought that questions about familiarity with custom and protocol in the interview schedule would address the kinds of knowledge that women might have acquired through both whanau and intertribal networks.

They spoke of the potential harm to women who had been victimised in whanau settings. They spoke of trying to engage Maori women with their history in a way, which gave them the power to address issues related to family/whanau dysfunction while at the same time claiming their heritage. They described this as a difficult task in many instances.

They wanted a question about women’s criminal history, not just about the offence that had just happened, but about why it happened and the circumstances surrounding the last offence. They wanted to know about why Maori women had ended up in prison in the first place.

Finally, they wanted it noted that it is very hard to change from a known way of living to *“trying new ways”*. They wondered if this was one of the risk factors for women. They questioned whether there are realistic alternatives for women and whether the alternatives of a straight life are worthwhile in comparison with offending. The group referred to negative statistics that supported their view regarding education and employment attainment, reflecting reduced opportunities for Maori women (see Te Puni Kokiri, 1998).

The questions in the interview about Maori culture were designed around these views and aimed to collect both descriptive data and qualitative data. The question about how women became involved

in offending and received their first prison sentence was addressed by the “reflective life factors” question at the end of the interview process which attempted to make sense of all the elements that might have influenced women in relation to offending.

There were many life factors selected for the research, which were shared across cultures and which Maori women also answered. The questions about economic circumstances and economic support on release from prison were relevant to all the participants. Serving a prison sentence provided a shared experience for all women caught up in the prison system. Women of all cultures were affected by the regulatory and policy constraints of imprisonment. Apart from the sections of the interviews that dealt with culture specifically, it was not within the scope of this study to explore the extent to which women from different cultures may be affected differentially by aspects of imprisonment or other factors associated with re-offending. The study focused more on the shared experience of women, although at the same time it recognised specific cultural needs related to the Maori women participants.

The draft of the interview schedule was sent back to Te Puna Oranga for their comment. The collective appointed Tania Matakī, a violence prevention trainer, to liaise with me about the research project. Tania’s final comment in relation to the questionnaire indicated support for the final draft: “Some of the questions (in the interview) are about really relevant issues.....I think (answering) it could be quite a healing process for some of the women.....the questions are ones that could make them reflect.” (Personal communication, 18 March, 1999).

As a result of the consultation process, Maori women participants were provided the option of having a *kai tiaki* (guide) with whom many of them were familiar, to assist with the interview. None of the participants in the study chose this option. This may have been because some women may not have been familiar with the person concerned and may have chosen to talk with the researcher whom they knew. The issue was not explored further in the interview process.

In addition to the cultural networks that were involved with released women inmates, social services in the wider Christchurch community also provide services to released women. A significant proportion of the interview was designed to explore some of the factors associated with social services that might impact on women as consumers. Consultation took place with staff from three social service agencies to ascertain their views about the interview schedule and the research. This

process enabled me to draw from the considerable experience and knowledge of some social service practitioners working with released women inmates.

6.6 Consultation with other social service organisations

My prior experience in working in the prison setting, involved frequent contact with a range of organisations that were engaged with providing services to women on release. A variety of community organisations fulfilled this function, ranging from the statutory function of the Community Probation Service to organisations providing half-way house accommodation and practical aid. My approach was to arrange to meet with staff at the agencies concerned, having prepared the agencies with advance information about the research proposal and the interview schedule content.

6.6.1 Community Probation

The Community Probation staff whom I consulted, comprised a group of women most of whom had worked with Christchurch Women's Prison as part of the Case Management team. Attendance at the meeting with me at the Probation office in the city was voluntary. One of the four staff who attended stated that it had been difficult to set aside the time due to the demands of work pressure. Other staff commented that there was a high degree of staff disillusionment with the organisation at this time, which may have contributed to an unwillingness to make the extra effort to attend the meeting.

The group was positive about the purposes of the research and felt that the content of the interview was broad and inclusive. They described a high level of technological change occurring in the workplace (a new computer programme had recently been installed) and how my visit had coincided with a period of low staff morale. A note in my research journal at the time referred to staff feeling "under siege" and seemingly "battle weary". There was a sense of urgency from this group about increasing knowledge and awareness of the needs of women offenders. A long-serving staff member described how Probation Officers used to be assigned to female clients on the basis of particular expertise and knowledge of working with this group. This structure had more recently altered so that staff was now randomly assigned to clients. Staff questioned whether this was in the best interests of female probationers. The discussion yielded no new information in regard to possible inadequacies in the interview schedule. This was contrary to the next community organisation consulted where

staff were keen to discuss the factors encountered in their work with ex-inmates and their families and to stress their own specific interest areas.

6.6.2 *The Family Help Trust*

The Family Help Trust provided intensive family support services to children whose families were deemed to be at high risk of criminal involvement. The Trust employs a number of family support workers who provide practical advice, information and support to families at risk. My meeting with the staff took place at the agency rooms with the majority of the workers present.

The issues raised in response to the interview schedule reinforced categories already included. Some staff expressed strong views, based on their practice experience of what impediments there were for their clients' addressing their offending. There were four particular areas that stood out from the feedback and these were based on their observations. They were the notion of offending behaviour as addictive, the practical difficulties of accessing benefits, the waiting periods for residential treatment for substance abuse, and lastly, the life goals that their clients aspired to. This last observation was in relation to the fact that in the workers' experience offenders were rarely, if ever, asked what their ambitions were for their return to the community. They thought that asking a question of this kind would elicit information about the degree of motivation an offender might have about whether to change their behaviour after release. I thought that this view had some merit and also that it tied into the question of strain theory and the ability of participants to achieve conventional societal goals. Finding out what life goals the participants might aspire to seemed a worthwhile addition to the interview and Questions 153 and 154 (Appendix 3) were framed in order to meet this need.

The staff at the Family Help Trust was universally keen to be involved with the research by giving information to prospective participants and were interested in the outcome of the questions about community agencies. Some of the Family Help Trust family support workers suggested that there may be problems in involving participants who were engaged with their service without offering a financial incentive. In this instance, I agreed that if some extraordinary expenses were incurred by the participant that I would be able to provide some assistance. However, my more optimistic view about the participant group, based on my experience of their interest in assisting each other, meant that I thought that payment for attending the interview would not be an expectation. As it transpired,

payment was not raised as an issue by the participants although assistance with transport costs was provided in one instance at the request of the participant.

Overall, in this agency there appeared to be a high level of intrinsic interest in finding better ways to support their women clients. The high level of motivation of staff towards their work with clients was consistently apparent in these community meetings. It was also evident in the last agency consulted where some workers had longstanding (in one case 10 years) association with the agency concerned.

6.6.3 The New Zealand Prisoners' Aid and Rehabilitation Society

As outlined in Part One PARS has provided generic, practical support to released prisoners in the Christchurch area for many years. The staff provided support to incarcerated inmates and their families and also to prisoners after release. The agency operated from a small office with no more than one fieldworker assigned to service Christchurch Women's Prison at any one time.

The factors that particularly interested PARS staff were the geographical area of the participant, and the physical and disability issues that they frequently encountered in their work. The two women workers present referred to the influence of gender issues for their female clients. This was based on their perception of the pressure brought to bear on some women in relationships by their over-controlling partners. The staff felt that women clients seemed to be heavily influenced by the relationships they were in and that this seemed to account for changes that might occur.

Apart from these issues, which were already covered in the interview schedule, the fieldworkers were keen to know clients' perception of the agency and what the agency was able to do. The staff was also interested to know what clients might like PARS to be able to do. As a consequence, the questions in the schedule that dealt with social service participation were expanded to cover in more detail what participants thought agencies may be able to do for them.

In summary, the process of consultation was invaluable in providing information to be considered in deciding the structure and content of the research interviews. It ensured that some significant ethical issues were considered both in terms of the content of the interview schedule and in terms of the interview process. The feedback was positive, in regard to the comprehensive range of factors

encompassed by the interview questions. The next phase of the research process involved applying for permission to undertake the research from the University of Canterbury, Human Ethics Committee. Ethical approval did not end the need to consider ethical issues, however, this continued throughout the project.

6.7 Ethical considerations

Having completed the consultation process, the next step was to obtain formal approval for the project from the Human Ethics Committee of the University of Canterbury, as required (with some limited exceptions) for all research involving human subjects. As mentioned earlier this in no way meant the exclusion of such considerations throughout the research. The predominant feminist tradition of interviewing requires rigorous reflection about values and ethics in terms of empowerment goals throughout the research process (Reinharz, 1992). Likewise, other writers in the wider field of qualitative research have referred to the ongoing emergence of ethical issues in research practice and the ongoing need to ensure that the interests of the subjects are protected (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2001). I will discuss ethical issues in chronological order as they arose in the context of particular phases of the research.

My professional background as a social worker had already helped to shape and develop my ethical practice. Whilst there are significant differences between formal research ethical requirements and professional ethical obligations there are, at the same time similarities. Certainly, social work practice experience presents the practitioner with potentially multiple kinds of ethical dilemmas many of which require careful reflection about the values that are expressed and the balance of interests of the parties involved. Witkin described how social work's "...history, professional identity, and mission are grounded in moral principles. The people we serve, the issues we care about, and our own actions, are subject to and constituted by judgements about right and wrong" (2000, p.197). The degree to which ethics and values imbue social work means that as a practitioner this has had a far-reaching impact on both my professional and personal conduct. The broad ethical principles of practice underpinning social work have been typologised by Reamer and provide an evolving values context within which practice occurs (1995). The impact on the practitioner has been described by Abramson as the process of getting to know oneself ethically and she has described such ethical self knowledge as necessary in social work interactions to enable the practitioner to have a heightened awareness and sensitivity to clients and their issues (1996).

This has meant that, in addition to the formal academic requirements, an overall commitment to advancing the situation of the target group of the research influenced the conception and process of the project. The ethics and values of social work in terms of anti-oppressive practice carry with them a responsibility to be "...bound up with notions of improving the quality of life or well-being of individuals, groups and communities" (Dominelli, 1998, p.5). Social work values and ethics were compatible with the feminist values that overlaid the research. The social work, private-troubles/public-issues interface was also compatible with the feminist goal of empowerment and social change. The latter ensured that gender remained at the centre of anti-oppressive concerns.

The question of how to record the interviews on audiotape or through note-taking, required the consideration of potential risk and ethical issues. My preference was to audiotape the interviews, so that the participants' voices would be preserved as accurately as possible. However, a number of questions in the schedule related to current and past offending. Whilst I designed these questions so that they would be non-specific, there was a possibility that the participants would proffer detailed information within the broad parameters of the more open questions in the schedule. The questions about offending were designed to explore offending behaviour that may be current and unreported in the sense that authorities may have been unaware of actual offending behaviour. There was additionally the possibility that past offences may be disclosed during the interview. I had become aware in my social work practice that a significant number of women described committing offences that were different in type and incidence from those they had been charged with and sentenced for. The implication for social research was the possibility of ignoring a large part of women's real lives by only focusing on offending that had been dealt with through official systems. I chose to consider both kinds of information in order to obtain a fuller and more "real" picture of what was happening in women's lives.

Given the likelihood of eliciting sensitive information that would be possibly prejudicial to the participants, I managed this in two ways. The first, as mentioned earlier, was to confine questions about offending to broad generic terms; no offence specific details were asked for. I consulted with a criminal barrister and solicitor in Christchurch about the legal ramifications of any knowledge I might acquire about offences. The opinion was that as long as I was not given knowledge of an offence that was about to take place, or of the details of an actual offence that had been committed, that I could not be considered liable in terms of the Crimes Act. Past experience had taught me that

the majority of women inmates were not ignorant of the risks attached to talking to others about the specifics of their offending. In the rare instances where these had been described to me, it was in the context of settling past offences whilst serving sentence within the parameters of the Crimes Act. I decided that it would be self-explanatory during the interview that offence specific-information was not required. This was not made explicit because of the client group's own caution in this regard.

The second strategy I chose was to take notes during the interview, in the presence of the participant, based on their responses. This method ensured that participants could see what was being recorded. I had found in past practice that women were sometimes suspicious of what I recorded in terms of case notes in the prison setting and I had become accustomed to making notes in their presence. I had developed a type of shorthand that assisted me with efficient note taking. This meant that if sensitive and potentially compromising information was disclosed the client was able to mandate what was recorded. In the case of details about serious misconduct by prison staff, women inmates had an understandable concern about access to the information. They described a real fear of repercussions for them in the case of prison-based complaints and the assurance of a locked filing cabinet was not always sufficient to allay their fears.

By recording the responses to questions on the questionnaires, I was able to facilitate a degree of immediate participant control over the data. Whilst this had implications for the time it might take to record information, I was confident that my speed of writing would enable sufficient detail to be recorded at the time. Any concerns about casting my own interpretation on the responses would be allayed by ensuring that the participant could see at all times what had been recorded. Much of the structured part of the schedule consisted of categorical and continuous questions where answers could readily be seen. The qualitative section was read back to the participant to check for accuracy before closing the interview.

In addition to concerns about the sensitive nature of questions in regard to participants' offending I was also concerned with the possible impact of other information that might be disclosed at the time of interview. The schedule contained a significant number of questions related to early victimisation. Some of these questions were raised in the structured part of the interview where responses were arguably easier to contain. However, this measure could not altogether prevent the possibility that these questions would evoke recollections of disturbing experiences that had occurred in participants' lives and that may be difficult for them to re-visit.

The final open-ended part of the interview would also potentially involve greater disclosure by the women of past traumatic experience. The open question that asked the participants to reflect on the range of factors introduced during the interview, coupled with their life history, invited the further exploration of sensitive issues.

Further questions in the schedule related to prison experiences and concerned the ability of women to address complaints within the prison system. Whilst the participants were no longer institutionalised, this type of information about prison systems can still be controversial and sensitive to the ex-inmates concerned.

In regard to the effect of recalling sensitive issues, I took the approach at the outset of the interview to allow for some ongoing involvement on my part, where participants might experience some continuing distress. Whilst this possibility was made clear in the information about participation, it was not stated again at the beginning of the interview, because of the concomitant risk of becoming drawn into my earlier social work practice role. However, I anticipated that I could offer advice and referral consequent to the interview so that access to assistance might be facilitated. Availability was again reinforced at the end of the interview. I was also mindful that it would not be possible to put a time constraint on the interview if further time was needed in order to leave the participant in a state of reasonable equilibrium. Some women would have to return to caring for children or other actions in their lives where distress would have been potentially obstructive.

It has been suggested that interviewers need to acquire crisis intervention skills where there is a possibility of traumatic experiences triggering strong emotional reactions in participants (Brzuzy, Ault & Segal, 1997). Such skills are necessary, I believe, as part of the interview preparation process. There is considerable advantage in having social work practice experience in this area in order to be able to competently respond to an emotional crisis during the interview process.

The advantage of the broad sweep of the interview schedule and the fact that it explored social supports in the community meant that I could act on knowledge thus gained. In the case of sexual abuse this might mean referral to the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), Sensitive Claims Section, and other relevant support agencies for women who had not received counselling or support in this regard. In other instances, it might have meant referral to known social service support

personnel who were clearly significant in participants' lives. The guiding ethical principle was to minimise potential harm and to empower the participants to obtain support and assistance where this was indicated. It was not possible to anticipate the ethical dilemmas that might arise but it was possible to "...be aware of sensitive issues and potential conflicts of interest." (Orb, Eisenhammer & Wynaden, 2001). I encouraged the women to contact me personally through the university or through relevant agencies if they had ongoing concerns related to the interviews. As it transpired, four of the participants requested further assistance in regard to referrals to other services.

6.8 Conclusion

The design of the research had to reflect my theoretical and methodological perspectives. It had to achieve this in such a way that it would demonstrate that theory had been integrated with practice. Miles and Huberman have referred to the risks of "sloppy" qualitative research and their comments can be readily applied to quantitative research (Miles & Huberman, 1995). Their concern in regard to the selective reporting of findings, a widely held concern in the field of qualitative methodology, relates to the inappropriate interference of the researcher in terms of data recording and interpretation. It was my experience that a similar mis-reporting of quantitative data was also possible and that recording notes in the presence of participants was one means by which to protect the integrity of the interview and the data.

It was important to me that the research design in terms of the data recording respected the needs of the participant group. In practice, this meant applying the social work practice knowledge I had gained from working with this group, in ways that protected their particular needs. Both quantitative and qualitative questions needed to be relevant and conducted in such a way that respected the response of the participants.

Chapter Seven

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis has been referred to as a process that begins at the start of the project and continues to the end (Huberman & Miles, 1994). This was certainly my experience in terms of the discrete stages of the research in learning about the wider knowledge of the field of women's-re-offending, consulting with practitioners in the field and listening to released inmates themselves. However, accompanying these stages a complex process of ongoing analysis occurred which may in some instances have been prompted by chance conversations with my wider social network. Formal thesis supervision engendered much ongoing retrospection and hypothesising. I found supervision provided me with valuable feedback and that it constantly challenged my thinking and offered alternative perspectives.

My task was to begin to make connections and to make sense of the data as it began to amass. There is a sense in which this process is incremental in that the more data is encompassed in the scope of understanding the more possible relationships become apparent. I hoped that areas of significance and of significant relationships would emerge from the variety of methods employed and from the ongoing process of analysis.

The breadth of variables was chosen specifically so that the study could ecologically explore a wide range of factors that might be associated with re-offending. An advantage of the initial quantitative approach was the managing of the large range of factors by the use of a statistical programme. Part of the process of administering this programme involved clustering of related variables and questioning possible inter-relationships. The extent of the variables meant some difficulty in determining statistical significance with the small number of participants involved. It was necessary to collapse some variables under single categories. However, I was determined to ensure that I comprehensively explored a wide range and avoided pre-determined significance of some over others. This is where the additional data collection methods involving secondary data and interviews with informed experts were employed to ensure the comprehensive exploration of a range of factors.

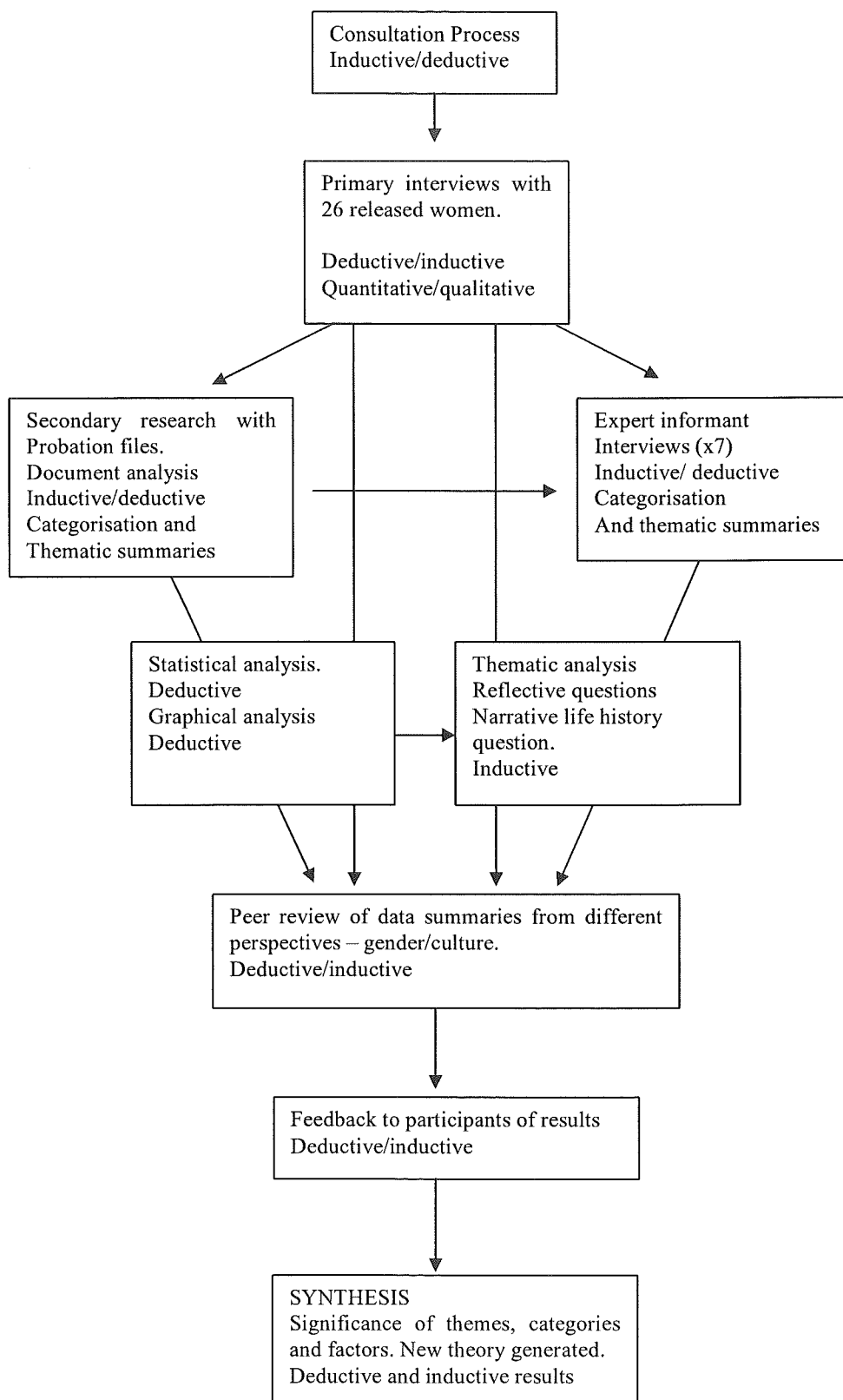
The process of reasoning followed an integrated and cyclical, deductive/inductive pattern. Where the questions were quantitative, analysis was clearly deductive. Where they were qualitative and generated new theory, there was the opportunity to follow this up deductively in additional data

collection. An example of this process involved the final narrative question that invited participants to reflect on their offending and on what had helped them to go straight. Where new theory was generated from this portion of the interview I could include it as part of the process of triangulation with the additional data collection. For example, where the participants referred to their frustration with methadone treatment waiting lists, and where they reported this as impacting on their offending, I was able to follow this up in the interviews with informed experts. Whilst the field of substance abuse was covered in the schedule, access to the methadone programme was not included as a specific question. A strict adherence to quantitative methods would have required exclusion of data relating to variables which had not been included as part of the original hypotheses. However, the strength of the combined methods was the ability to explore new areas of potential significance and, more importantly, areas initiated by the participants.

I found Huberman and Miles' analytical typology most useful in understanding how to organise and manage the data from the combined methods. Their "transcendental realist" (1994, p.429) perspective encompasses historical realism along with interpretive methodology. Their conceptual framework of analysis described as an "interactive model" which involves "data reduction", "data display" and "conclusion drawing/verification" provided a broad structure for both methods within which I managed the analysis (1994, pp.428-429). Each stage of the triad of analysis is applied to each stage of data processing and occurs at the planning stage, during collection and post collection. Where multiple methods are involved, the triad operates across methodological boundaries so that a degree of synthesis may be arrived at. The interactive model has been applied throughout the analysis phase.

The following flowchart illustrates the deductive/inductive flow of reasoning that took place in the processing of data. It also illustrates the discrete stages at which a particular conceptual framework operated in terms of the analytical typology. In other words, different data sources reflected differing perspectives on re-offending.

Figure 7.1: Flowchart of Data Collection and analysis process



The planning and consultative phase involved deducing what were the significant categories and factors in relation to women's re-offending and decisions were already being made at this point about what to exclude and what to include. The literature review offered access to wider international and national, academic and public policy ideas about the topic. The consultation process offered the realism of what took place in practice and the ideas subscribed to by practitioners in the field. A number of categories and sub-categories were derived from this stage. These then went on to inform the interview schedule.

The instrumentation for this quantitative stage of analysis was chosen to enhance internal validity so that some cross-participant generalisations might be achieved. The ability to manage the data collection for the range of factors involved also influenced this choice of method.

The interview schedule was comprised of a range of multi-answer, self-report questions, of which 83 were analysed quantitatively. The quantitative questions were either categorical ("yes", "no", "maybe") or continuous (a range of answers from "never" to "very often") or they were accompanied by a Likert-type scale (1-10).

For the purpose of the first stage of statistical analysis for which the Statistica programme was employed, forty-seven variables were derived from 83 questions and were arrived at by clustering a number of related variables under a single factor. For example, where a number of questions explored the nature of substance abuse, that is, whether it took place inside or outside prison these were collapsed to a single variable of "substance abuse". The questions related to mental health were also collapsed to one variable denoting the presence or absence of mental health issues. The decision to collapse the variables was based on initial correlational analysis and on the logical association between different clusters of variables. The more similar a question was to another, the more likely it was to be collapsed. The collapsed variables were then submitted to descriptive discriminant analysis with the dependent variable "re-offending", using the SPSS programme.

Graphical analysis, using the Microsoft Word programme, Excel was also employed with major categories. This created another tier of quantitative and descriptive analysis additional to the discriminant analysis of the previously selected variables. Whereas the statistical programme required the use of single factors in a de-contextualised fashion, the graphical analysis allowed for descriptive data associated with cases. This additional descriptive data enabled me to analyse, for

example, an overall financial status both individually and across cases that involved a number of related financial factors.

The qualitative questions in the schedule were thematically analysed by a process of categorisation and summarisation. Construct and descriptive-contextual validity was the primary concern in this choice of analysis, requiring a constant check that my interpretation connected with “people’s lived experience” and that my own influence as the researcher was lessened (Huberman & Miles, 1994, p.441). The more narrative, qualitative question was treated in a way that allowed longitudinal consideration of factors during the life course. Analysis began with each individual story that represented a complex array of unique life experiences. Following individual case analysis, women’s stories about their offending, and what helped them to stop offending, were compared across the group for similarities in terms of factors.

The analysis of the secondary research of the individual Probation files followed a qualitative process of categorising and summarising. There was a deductive element in terms of this data in that the Probation records already expressed varying degrees of categorisation. This was particularly so in regard to pre-sentence reports and judge’s sentencing notes. It was not as discernible in ongoing case note data that appeared more random and inclined to comment on a broader set of factors.

A similar process of categorisation and summarisation was applied to the data from the informed experts. The recorded interviews were listened to, so as to establish the accuracy of the note recording and whether there were significant areas overlooked. The notes were then further categorised and summarised into broad clusters of related factors. Throughout this process, attention was paid to the information that had been provided by prior sources. New categories generated from these interviews were created where they arose.

Final analysis required a synthesis of the results from each of the data collection methods. Richards & Richards have referred to this process in qualitative research as one of working “up” from the data. It involved “...reflecting on and exploring data records; discovering patterns and constructing and exploring impressions, summaries, pen portraits” (Richards & Richards, 1994, p.446). The same authors refer to the fact that combined methods also require working “down” (Richards & Richards, 1994, p.446) from theory and sometimes from formal hypotheses. I treated the synthesis of results from both processes both quantitatively and qualitatively in order to achieve an overall

understanding of the factors related to women's re-offending and factors related to protection from offending.

The synthesis led to final integration of the data using the *triangulation design model* that provided the framework for the data collection process. Integration is potentially more difficult to achieve where numerical and textual data need to be reconciled. In order to assist final integration I took the approach of reporting the quantitative results first, the qualitative results second. However, in order to converge the results I chose to transform some types of data into other forms (Creswell, Plano Clark, Guttman, & Hanson, 2003). For example, in some sections of reporting I have quantitatively counted the codes from the qualitative results. Taking this approach will not satisfy purists in either qualitative or quantitative paradigms, however, this approach was driven by the focus on the facets of the phenomena not by adherence to strict paradigmatic codes.

Conclusion to Part Three

Part Three has described the theoretical underpinnings of the methodological approach adopted and its process. It began with an explanation of feminism as a movement and how this informed the researcher, the research, and also the context within which it took place. Feminism is frequently described as a dynamic perspective with changing emphases brought about by response to ongoing critique (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). Arguably, critique has been generated as much from within the feminist movement as from without, as different interest groups have expressed their relative experience of feminism (Fonow & Cook, 1991). The process of deconstruction is accompanied by a continual process of reconstruction, characterized by an ongoing commitment to advancing the interests of women.

Feminist social science research has grown within the context of the wider socio-political landscape that has responded in varying degrees to the feminist critique. It is difficult to separate ideology, feminist social science theory, methodology and methods within feminist social science. The basic tenet that the “personal is political” means that the researcher must position herself and the research within the wider context. This also requires that the methods employed in research correspond with the basic tenets of feminism and that the voices of the women who are subjects of research can influence theory development. This interface between theory, methodology and the wider socio-political context is represented in diagrammatic form on page 101 and the subsequent chapters go on to explain how this interface operated in this project.

Following the socio-political context, the key elements of what this means for feminist social science for the purposes of research are then described. The defining features of a feminist theory and methodology are outlined under key headings that summarise different and complementary aspects of feminist research.

Under the heading “research design” I then went on to describe how the theory and methodology were to be implemented and the variety of methods to be employed in this multi-method study. Detailed reporting of the consultation process was necessary in order to demonstrate how the subject population and individuals associated with it had the opportunity to influence the research from the outset.

The closing section of Part Three has dealt with the data analysis structure and has detailed different data collection methods and the appropriate analytical tools to be employed. Part Four will report the findings and the discussion that emerged from the analysis.

PART FOUR THE FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction to Part Four

Part Four will present the findings derived from the data analysis process outlined in Part Three. The results of each data collection method will be reported individually, with some accompanying discussion about recent research results that relate to the particular method employed. This discussion is intended to provide a research context as a reference point wherein the findings from this study may be situated.

A synthesis of the major insights based on the findings from the respective methods will be progressively developed. This will be related ultimately to the questions I began with in relation to women and re-offending as outlined in the introduction to the thesis.

There will follow a discussion about the implications of the findings for the development of theory in relation to women's re-offending. This will involve a process of re-visiting the predominant ideas introduced in the earlier chapters that provided a broad theoretical and historical context. Recommendations for further research and for further theoretical exploration will follow.

Emphasis will then be placed on the implications for current approaches to women's re-offending and to current criminal justice policy in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Particular attention will be paid to potential changes in social policy in ways that may advance the situation of released women inmates. These will be described more fully in the appropriate section. The focus of this final part is pragmatic in the sense that the study will be related to social action and to those areas that may be impacted by changes to criminal justice and social policy in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Chapter Eight

The Quantitative Findings

8.1 Introduction

The report of the findings will begin by introducing the participant group in broad descriptive terms. This description will be compared with the 1999 Prison Census data, which was traversed in Part One, to see whether the participant group shared similar broad demographic attributes. The demographic data will provide the starting point for beginning to know the participant group. Whilst the data are treated in a collective fashion, each item represents an aspect of an individual person and I remain acutely aware of this.

Following the demographic data, the findings related to the main purpose of the study will be reported and these are the variables that may be related to re-offending. This section will begin with the results of the Risk/Needs questionnaire that was administered at the outset of the interview. The quantitative findings from the primary interviews will follow and will include descriptive data of the major categories explored.

The qualitative findings will then be reported and will be related to and inter-woven with the quantitative findings. This will complete the data that originated directly from the participants themselves.

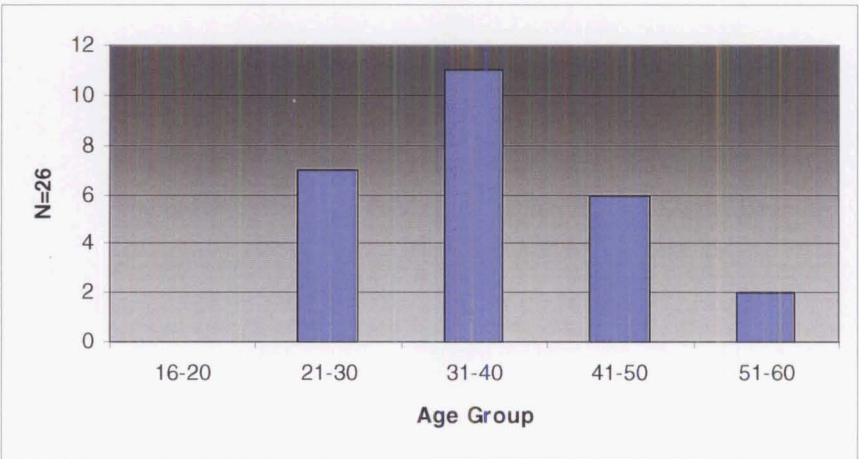
The final part of the report of the findings will consider the results of the additional data sources, which comprised the Community Probation files analysis and the interviews with expert informants. Comparisons and links will be made with the primary interview data in terms of marked differences or points of similarity and the implications of these. The significant findings from the data overall will be summarised thematically and their implications for policy and practice will then be discussed in the final part of the thesis.

8.2 Demographic Data

8.2.1 Age

The age of the participants reflected the fact that many had been released from prison for some time and therefore were likely to be older than the New Zealand women’s prison population. This was borne out by the age range, which was predominantly in the 31-40 range as Graph 1 shows. The median age for the group was 29.5 with the youngest participant aged 22 years and the oldest, 52 years.

Figure 8.1: Age of Participants⁴⁶



The group was older than a similar representative group of women in prison based on the 1999 Prison Census. The predominant age grouping for women in prison at the time of the census was between 17 and 34 (Department of Corrections, 2000a, p.13). The comparatively small numbers of women in prison in New Zealand at any one time is likely to account for some significant demographic differences over time.

The age of the participant group in this study reflected a time in women’s lives when they were likely to be responsible for children and could be otherwise expected to have achieved a career

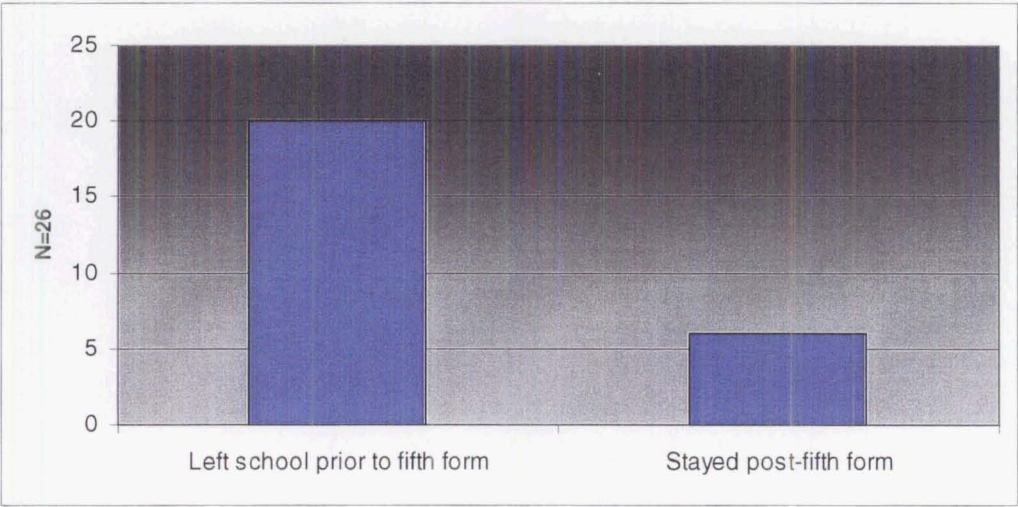
⁴⁶ Throughout the reporting of quantitative data I have used upper case and italicised “*N*” to denote the whole participant group. Where the findings concern a subgroup such as all those participants with dependant children I have used lower case “*n*” and where two comparable sub-groups have required further description I have employed lower case “*n*” and superscript numbers.

through either education or training. However, the data from educational attainment makes it clear that employment opportunities and career options were limited for this group as a whole.

8.2.2 *Formal Education*

Figure 8.2 details how many of the participant group completed their secondary schooling. As can be seen, the majority, left secondary school before the end of the fifth form and consequently left without formal school qualifications.

Figure 8.2: Secondary schooling



A high number left formal schooling at the age of 13 almost immediately after completing their primary schooling. Six participants left secondary school in the fourth form at the age of 14 years. Five left in the third form at the age of 12 to 13 years and one participant stated she had no formal schooling after the age of 10 which would have been after her Standard Four year.

This level of schooling is lower than that reported in the 1999, which shows that at that time 31% of female inmates left secondary school with some qualifications (Department of Corrections, 2000a). This compares with the participant group where 23%⁴⁷ had acquired some school qualifications.

One of the participants in this study (3.85%) had obtained tertiary qualifications some years after release from prison. This compares with 4.8% of women with a University Diploma or degree and

⁴⁷ Percentages are rounded and may not aggregate exactly to 100%

21.4% with some form of trade or technical training reported in the 1999 Prison Census (Department of Corrections, 2000a).

8.2.3 *Ethnicity*

Eleven out of the twenty-six participants in this study described themselves as New Zealand Maori. At 42% of the participants overall this reflected a proportion that matched the 42% of women who described themselves as Maori in the 1997, Prison Census (Department of Corrections, 1997). The more recent 1999, Prison Census reported 59% of female inmates as Maori, 31% as European and 10% as Pacific peoples (Department of Corrections, 2000a, p.13). When this proportion is compared with the 14.5% of Maori people in the New Zealand population in 1996 (New Zealand Yearbook, 2000) the disparity is marked.

The number of Maori women involved with this study may have reflected a higher proportion of Maori women for the Christchurch area given that a significant number of women held in Christchurch Women's Prison at any one time, come from the North Island.⁴⁸ Organisations working with women on release such as the Canterbury Prisoner's Aid and Rehabilitation Society have referred to the numbers of North Island Maori women who choose to stay in Christchurch once they have made friendships in Christchurch Women's Prison.⁴⁹ This has not been recorded officially.

One participant described her origins in another culture, which could not be disclosed because of confidentiality concerns with the small number of participants. In effect, 12 out of the 26 women or 46 per cent of the participants described themselves as other than Pakeha. The scope of this study did not extend to considering the specific needs of other minority cultures.

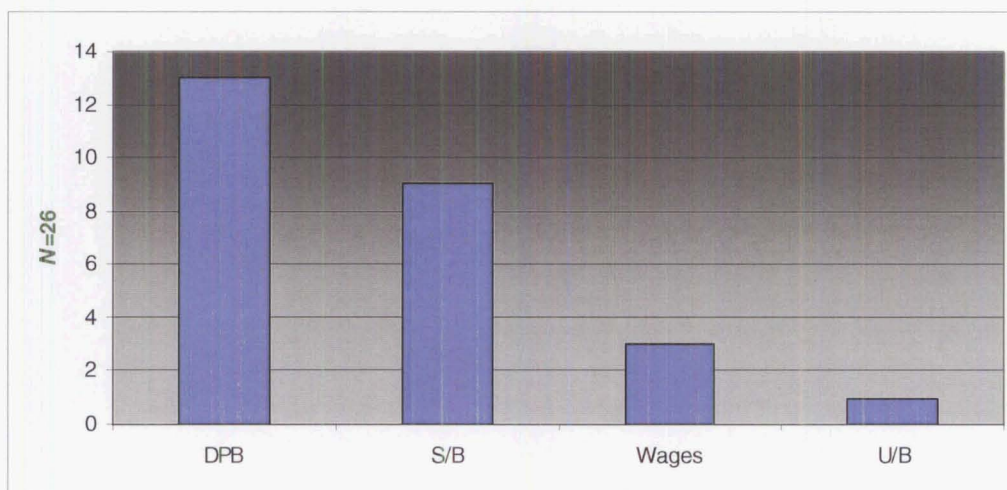
8.2.4 *Income Status*

At the time of interview in 1999, the majority of participants reported that Social Security Benefits comprised their major source of income. Figure 8.3 represents these sources.

⁴⁸ Unpublished statistics provided by the Department of Corrections.

⁴⁹ Conversation with Prisoner's Aid and Rehabilitation Fieldworker, November, 1999.

Figure 8.3: Main sources of income⁵⁰



The majority of women in the study or 50% were sole parents and were receiving the Domestic Purposes Benefit which, at the time, was set at the base rate of \$211.82 (nett) with one child. An additional payment of \$20.00 (approximately) was made for each subsequent child.⁵¹ Supplementary forms of support were available for accommodation costs and disability-related costs.

Those on the Sickness Benefit comprised the next largest group or 35%. Seven out of the nine women in this category described substance dependency as the main reason for receiving the Sickness Benefit. Two out of the nine women described mental illness as the main reason. The Sickness Benefit was fixed at the rate of the Unemployment Benefit but unlike the Unemployment Benefit did not require the Work Test to be applied. One participant was receiving the Unemployment Benefit.

The three women receiving wages had been successful in obtaining employment, in some cases some years after release from prison. Their occupations were semi-skilled, in the agricultural sector, in manufacturing industries and in a professional occupation.

⁵⁰ The benefits referred to are as follows: DPB (Domestic Purposes Benefit), S/B (Sickness Benefit) and U/B (Unemployment Benefit).

⁵¹ Department of Social Welfare, Social Policy Agency, Rates of Income-tested Benefits and Allowances, 1 April 1999-31 March, 2000.

Two women described their main source of income as supplemented by the proceeds of some cannabis-related offending. Both women described this as helping them to manage to provide for their children and neither regarded this offending as criminal.

The average annual nett income of the participants amounted to \$14,717.00. This amount was based on their weekly income at the time of interview. The lowest income received was \$7,956.00 for a single Unemployment Benefit. The highest income was for a wage earner at \$33,800.00. The average income level for the majority of the participants placed them in the lowest percentile of income earners according to Statistics New Zealand, 1999.⁵²

The information in regard to income sources is similar to that provided in the Prison Census (Department of Corrections, 2000a) with the exception that there was a higher proportion of participants receiving Social Security Benefits, 88% as compared with 73.2% of women in the Prison Census. There were also a higher number of participants receiving the Domestic Purposes and Sickness Benefits compared with the same Census.

In addition to sources of income, each participant was asked about their financial status in terms of their level of outstanding debt. Individual budgets were also completed to indicate overall levels of income and expenditure. The New Zealand Family Budgeting Service advice was used as a guideline for the budget assessment, informing the next two items.

8.2.5 *Levels of Debt*

Eighteen of the 26 participants or 69% had some outstanding debt. The lowest level of debt was \$80.00 and the highest was \$7,000.00. In a number of cases, the individual budgets were adversely affected by having to meet the cost of debts. Debts that the participants may have incurred with the Department of Work and Income were carried over from their period of imprisonment and in these cases women were paying historical debt from their previous financial circumstances. This historical debt also meant that access to recoverable and non-recoverable assistance through the Department of Work and Income was restricted.

⁵² Income of Persons Year Ended March 1999, Statistics New Zealand

8.2.6 *Income and Expenditure*

The following list is made up of the main weekly budget items described in the interview schedule. Additional items were added as they applied to individual circumstances.

- Rent/board
- Mortgage
- Power
- Telephone
- Food
- Transport
- Medical Expenses
- Clothing
- School Fees
- Hire Purchase
- Loans
- Leisure

None of the participants were paying mortgage costs. The amounts for food and other expenses were generally conservative or the minimum that could be designated.

After completing the first of the interviews it became clear that there was frequently a significant gap between expenditure and income. Two examples that illustrate how this gap came about represent firstly, a single beneficiary and secondly, a beneficiary with children. The single beneficiary was receiving \$110.00 nett each week. Her board came to \$100.00 and her expenditure was made up of board, transport, clothing and leisure totalling \$170.00. The cost of tobacco was included under leisure for this participant. Clearly there was a shortfall and even when \$30.00 for leisure and \$20.00 for clothing was removed the costs significantly exceeded income. The budget in this case did not include medical expenses.

The single parent on the Domestic Purposes Benefit with one child received \$252.00 weekly. The following costs were taken from this amount:

Rent	\$165.00
Power	\$20.00
Food	\$75.00
Transport	\$20.00
Medical Expenses	\$5.00
Clothing	\$10.00
Preschool fee	\$30.00
Hire Purchase	\$17.00
Baycorp ⁵³	\$10.00
Fines	\$25.00
Total	\$377.00
Excess expenditure over income:	\$125.00

This participant explained that she rarely afforded clothing. She supplemented her benefit by “street work” (prostitution), which was difficult at the time; whereas she had been able to support herself adequately with some “street work” in the past, at the time of interview there was strong competition on the streets. Older street workers were being undercut by a new younger group of competitors and this had reduced her income to \$80.00 that week. This income is not included in the budget because of its unreliability. However, significant street earnings would have had to be made to make up the shortfall. Food banks had helped to provide basic food items at particularly difficult times. The fines debt collection administered through the Department for Courts required an automatic weekly deduction of \$25.00. Other debts were paid infrequently and in small amounts. The participant had some items in the pawnshop that she hoped to be able to redeem once she was able to earn more. The pre-school fees were necessary for child care so that she could attend a job skills course.

Of the remaining beneficiaries, the highest income deficiency was recorded for women with dependant children who were in receipt of the Domestic Purposes Benefit. Two beneficiaries had more generous levels of income where they were in a domestic partnership with other women. In these circumstances, they were able to receive the single rate of benefit despite their combined

⁵³ A major debt collection agency

living costs. However, the budgeted amounts for basic necessities such as food and power were still low to moderate in these cases. The most glaring income deficiencies were experienced by single parents who were living alone. None of their budgets took account of expenses such as school uniforms and associated school costs such as books and stationery. These budgets also did not take account of birthdays and other family-associated costs. Women in these circumstances reported the highest level of financial stress and the greatest difficulty in meeting outstanding debts. The financial status of this group corresponds with concern expressed by the current Labour Government which in a number of social policy documents refers to the situation of sole parent beneficiaries.⁵⁴

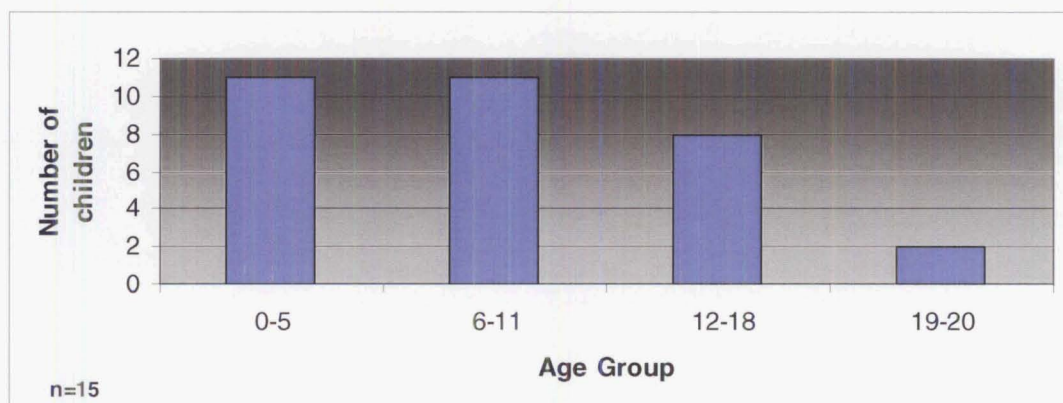
8.2.7 *Dependant Children*

The majority of the participants in the study had dependant children. In one case the four children concerned were not related to the caregiver but belonged to her male partner who was serving a sentence of imprisonment at the time. The remaining of the participants' children were living with their birth mothers. Fifteen of the 26 participants or 58% had dependant children at the time of interview. This compares with 56% of women in the Prison Census (Department of Corrections, 2000a). Of the 15 women with dependant children in this study, 13 were sole parents or 87% as compared with 75% of women in the Prison Census (Department of Corrections, 2000a).

There were a total of 32 children spread across the parents in the study and Figure 8.4 shows their age distribution. Caring for young children meant that a particular set of practical limitations was likely to impact on this group such as meeting the needs of children's health, housing, education and child care. As can be seen, the majority of children (22) were in the 0-11 age range.

⁵⁴ Report to the incoming Minister of Social Development, 2002; New Zealand Living Standards Report, Ministry of Social Development, 2000.

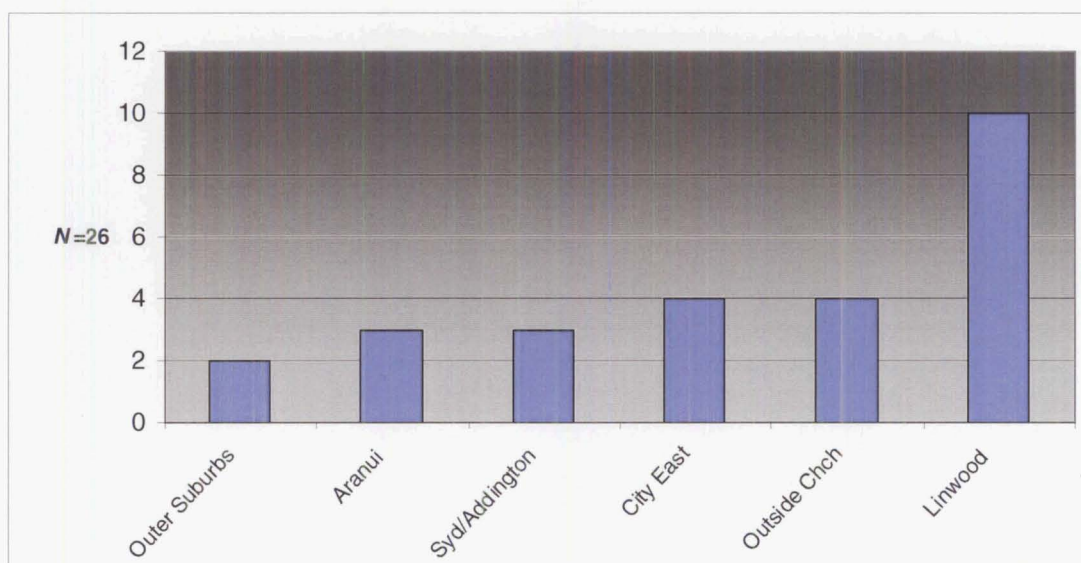
Figure 8.4: Age distribution of dependant children



8.2.8 Area of Residence

The majority of the participants resided in the inner suburbs of Christchurch city. The following figure illustrates the place of residence.

Figure 8.5: Areas of residence



There were three participants who lived in the wider Christchurch region and one participant who had lived most of her years since release in the Christchurch area and had recently moved to the Otago area, which is South of Christchurch.

The areas of residence compared closely with the findings of a study completed in 1990 concerning the geography of women's crime (Clark, 1990). The study also found that women released from Christchurch Women's Prison were predominantly residing in or near inner-city suburbs and in low socio-economic areas (Clark, 1990).

8.2.9 *Housing Conditions*

Fifty per cent of the participants described their accommodation as satisfactory. The remaining 50% stated that there were problems with their housing. The most commonly reported problem was the small size of tenancies with overcrowding a significant problem for mothers with children. Lack of independent space for adolescent children was cited specifically as a strain on the family. The cost of rental accommodation was cited by two participants as a significant factor affecting their ability to meet their overall living costs. A "bad neighbourhood", difficulty with physical access and dampness were cited in other instances. None of the participants owned their own homes.

8.2.10 *Criminal History*

The category of prior criminal history was determined, for the purposes of this study, as the status of a participant prior to her most recent period of imprisonment. This meant that those women who were classified as "first offenders" at the time of imprisonment would have the same classification at the time of interview. A "recidivist", according to the measure in the New Zealand Prison Census is any person who has had successively more than one sentence of imprisonment.

Twenty-three out of the 26 participants or 88% were classified as "recidivist" at the time of the last prison sentence. This is higher than the wider women's prison population at 75% (Department of Corrections, 2000a). From the Probation files, it was clear that a number of the participants had had many accumulated prison sentences that equated to many years of imprisonment interspersed with periods in the community. Their individual files were multiple, thick and overflowing with the official records of their criminal history.

There were 11% who had had no prior imprisonment history compared with 25% in the larger women's prison population according to the prison census (Department of Corrections, 2000a). In other words, there were a higher proportion of recidivists involved with this study.

When asked what kind of offending the women had been sentenced for prior to their last period of imprisonment, eight of the participants reported violent offending. Eighteen reported non-violent types of offending. The following table illustrates the types of offences as items within each major offence type:

Table 8.1: Most serious offence type of violent and non-violent categories leading to most recent imprisonment

Non-violent Offences		Violent Offences	
Fraud	4	Kidnapping/Agg robbery	1
Arson	2	Grievous Bodily Harm	1
Receiving	1	Murder	1
Possession for supply	4	Intent to injure	1
Burglary	2	Kidnapping, threats to kill	1
Breach of PD ⁵⁵	1	Assault on police officer	1
Theft	2	Assaults male	1
DWD ⁵⁶	1	Assaults police officer and aggravated robbery	1
Total	<u>18</u>	Total	<u>8</u>

The New Zealand Criminal Justice Act was amended in 1999, with the most significant change that may have affected this group of offenders being the introduction of Home Detention as a community-based sanction. The women sentenced for more minor non-violent offences, such as driving while disqualified, would most likely receive different sentences under the new Act. However, at the time of the interviews the range of sanctions was more limited and women were more likely to be sanctioned by a term of imprisonment.

Of the group of violent offenders who participated in the study, only one had dependent children at the time of the offence. The remainder were single women at the time of the offence.

The most common offence for which the mothers were charged was possession of drugs for supply followed by fraud and theft. The data available from the Department of Corrections do not distinguish the type of offence committed by caregivers in its custody. This issue will be discussed further in this study in relation to other findings.

⁵⁵ Breach of Periodic Detention, a community-based sanction

⁵⁶ Driving while disqualified

8.3 Conclusion to demographic data

The participants in this study were predominantly surviving on low-incomes, had incomplete secondary education and few vocational qualifications. The majority had dependant children and a significant minority of this group were sole parents. Those who had partners had varying degrees of support from them, with some partners supporting their families financially but not taking a full parental role. Others considered themselves in a partnership although the partner was absent through imprisonment.

With the exception of one participant, the majority were in rental accommodation with a significant number experiencing problems associated with inadequate housing. The majority had limited assets and many had acquired significant debts.

Despite the level of economic and social disadvantage evidenced by this data, as a researcher I was always welcomed into the participants' homes and offered a cup of tea. The women invariably had prepared for my arrival and their homes were tidy and clean. They frequently apologised for the children's toys or things left around the room where the interview was held and clearly made considerable efforts to explain their particular circumstances. I found their efforts at managing sometimes large families, admirable given the extent of the problems that some of them went on to describe to me. In a few instances I followed up the interview with a referral to a food bank in order to alleviate an immediate and severe shortage of food.

The next section of the data to be reported are the results from the Probation risk/needs assessments that were conducted at the beginning of the interview. These assessments were examples of "official" categories that were considered at the time of the interview to be predictive of re-offending.

8.4 Official Status and Re-offending

8.4.1 *Current risk of re-offending and the Probation Risk/Needs assessment*

The Community Probation Risk/Needs Assessment Scales that were applied were based on the Level of Service Inventory Revised, or LSI-R, referred to in Part Two of this thesis. This assessment tool was developed in Canada and the United States as a predictive measure of male re-offending. At the time of the interviews in 1999-the tool was still employed by the Community Probation service in Christchurch and the majority of the participants were familiar with it. They were invited in a collaborative way to undertake the assessment so that they could reflect and comment on how they perceived their own level of risk of re-offending. The categories in the assessments, as discussed in earlier chapters, were based on widely understood criminogenic factors believed to constitute predictors of re-offending. These same criminogenic factors became relied upon in a number of jurisdictions, including the state of Victoria in Australia and in New Zealand during the 1990s, as part of correctional assessment and classification systems that administer criminal justice legislation.⁵⁷

The risk/needs assessment scale did not constitute the core subject of this research, which was designed to be a broader exploration of factors that may be associated with women's re-offending. It did however provide some official context to the research, as it constituted part of the correctional system within which factors were already deemed to be predictive of female offending in the New Zealand criminal justice system at that time.

A copy of the risk/needs assessment schedules are included as Appendix 2a and 2b (Community Probation Risk Assessment Scale and Assessment of Offender Needs, Department of Corrections, 1999). The factors will not be described in detail here apart from those about which questions arose from administering the questionnaire. The aggregate scores for both the risks (predictive static factors) and the needs (predictive dynamic factors) are significant in terms of sentence recommendations and sentence planning. The individual scores of the participants provided an "official" assessment of degree of risk of re-offending as distinct from offending that might actually have been committed.

⁵⁷ New Zealand's version of the LSI-R has since been modified as referred earlier although the new assessments of risk and criminogenic needs (ROC/RoL and the OCN AND PCN) have maintained similar categories.

In administering the schedule a number of immediate issues arose in its application to women. The question relating to employment is based on the assumption that “not being employed” constitutes a risk factor. A number of the women in this study regarded themselves as full-time caregivers and, therefore, as gainfully employed. The fact of the dual social roles of women, arguably raises the question of how their “employment” status may be described for the purposes of this assessment.

The issue of methadone use also became problematic in terms of the indicators used in association with alcohol and other drug use. Four of the women reported deficits in their functioning while using methadone. In two cases this interfered with their ability to undertake training or employment and they were on the Sickness Benefit. Some referred to risks associated with methadone use in terms of access to other criminal associates and the re-sale value of the substance. This is aside from the protective factors they described associated with methadone, such as reduced illicit drug-taking and less need to commit crime.

Noticeably absent in the official Criminogenic Needs Assessment, was any recognition of the parenting role of mothers, both in terms of the skills required for this role, and in terms of employment options. The category of *financial management* was based entirely on individual financial management skills. Many of the mothers in this study argued that their financial management skills were exceptional given their particular circumstances. Whether their legal income was sufficient for their needs is a question that was not addressed in the assessments.

Overall, there was a heavy emphasis in the risk assessment towards static, historic factors which the person is unable to change, a heavy emphasis on individual deficits in the needs assessment and a complete absence of consideration of external factors such as income sufficiency in both assessments. The assessments fulfil a particular purpose in terms of sentence administration and are significant in terms of the information that may be logged semi-permanently on an individual’s file. It is questionable whether they adequately reflected the experience of women, particularly those who were solely responsible for dependant children.

The results of the risk/needs assessments are reported in the next section where they are compared with the participants’ own assessments of their degree of risk or re-offending.

8.4.2 *Self-report re-offending*

Following the administration of the Probation risk/needs scales the participants were asked to disclose whether they had actually offended since release from prison (Question 62). This measure was used as a basis to classify the participants into two groups of re-offenders and non-offenders. Two groups of 13 were created as “non-offenders” (n^1) and “offenders” (n^2) based on this self-assessment. This distinction was not necessarily related to official recorded re-offending for which they may have received further criminal sanctions. Rather, it was a distinction based on their knowledge of their own criminal behaviour since their last prison sentence.

Such distinctions are by no means simple in that the re-offending may have occurred within the immediate weeks after release and not have occurred since. In other cases the re-offending may have constituted a one-off “slip-up” over a lengthy period of abstinence from offending and not have incurred a sentence of imprisonment. The type of the re-offence may also have been relative to the participant. That is, not committing a violent offence may well have meant an improvement in the participant’s functioning even though she may have continued some property offending. In other cases, the participant may have resided in the community successfully for some years after one episode of re-offending and have made an effort to “go straight” since. The problem of defining “offence” means that the researcher inevitably has to make a distinction at some point. How the participant viewed her own behaviour at the time of the interview was used as the starting point for defining re-offending for the purpose of distinguishing between participants.

In addition to Question 62, other later questions in the interview schedule that may have brought to light re-offending were considered in assessing to which group a participant belonged. Other questions in the interview schedule were not intended as “trick” questions but, for example, where sources of income were explored, criminal sources may well have been referred to that had not been mentioned earlier. One participant disclosed that she had not offended since leaving prison (Question 62) but then went on to describe some drug-related activity as supplementing her income in a response to Question 103. The participant concerned did not regard her behaviour as criminal but rather viewed it as a rational way to meet the needs of the large number of children she was supporting. Where responses to questions about re-offending were markedly inconsistent I took the approach of exploring the information with the participant in order to check which information was

correct for the participant. In addition to the later issues that may have arisen in relation to re-offending during the interview, I also took into account the Probation records.

The Probation information that related to current offending status assisted in confirming delineation of the groups. I did not experience a situation where the participant claimed she had not offended and the Probation record indicated she had. On the contrary, it was more likely that the participant reported “unknown” offending. This may suggest that self-report data from offenders may provide more accurate information than that acquired through the application of official measures and sources (Kroner & Loza, 2001; Motiuk, Motiuk & Bonta, 1992). All the participants had agreed to my viewing their Probation records and, therefore, were aware that what they had to say could be checked against their offence history. This may well have influenced some to be open about their offending because it could be checked. However, the significant number who disclosed offending that had not been sanctioned, and was not known to the Probation service, may have indicated a high, overall level of honesty for the majority of participants in response to this set of questions.

The results of the risk/needs assessments were compared with the self-report data and the Probation data relating to current offending status. The following tables show the results of the application of the risk/needs measure associated with self-report comments of the participant and compared with Probation record offence data from individual files that applied at the time of interview.

Table 8.2: Risk Needs Assessment: Non-offenders (n¹=13) ranked from highest to lowest risk scores with self-report and Probation record comments on risk

Risk Scale		Needs Scale	
Low Risk	0-7	Low	-8 to 14
Moderate Risk	8-14	Moderate	15 to 24
High Risk	15 and over	High	25 and over

Risk Score	Needs Score	Self-report Comments	Probation records
39	6	Low risk due to methadone programme.	12 months since last imprisonment.
32	4	Low risk	Six months since last imprisonment.
25	3	Low risk	Nil offences since last imprisonment five months ago.
22	7	Low risk	Seven years since last imprisonment.
21	-5	Low risk	Six years since last imprisonment.
21	10	Low risk	Six months since last imprisonment.
21	1	Low risk	Twelve months since last imprisonment.
18	8	High risk	Six months since last imprisonment.
13	-3	Low risk	Two years since last imprisonment.
11	15	Low risk	Twelve months since last imprisonment.
11	1	Low risk	Six months since last imprisonment. Re-offended in first two weeks after release.
10	-3	Low risk	Eighteen months since last imprisonment.
4	-6	Low risk	Six years since last imprisonment.
Total risk 248	Total needs 38		

Table 8.3: Risk/Needs Assessment: Re-offenders ($n^2=13$) ranked from highest to lowest needs with self report and Probation data on level of needs

Risk Scale		Needs Scale	
Low Risk	0-7	Low	-8 to 14
Moderate Risk	8-14	Moderate	15 to 24

Risk Score	Needs Score	Self-report Comments	Probation records
43	31	High	Serving community-based sentence.
34	13	High	Serving community-based sentence.
33	9	High	Serving Community-based sentence.
31	2	Low risk	One recent prison sentence of seven weeks. First offence in six years.
27	1	Low risk	Five years since last prison sentence. One court fine since then.
25	-3	Low risk since being on methadone programme.	About to be discharged from parole.
25	16	High	Six months since last imprisonment. Drug-related offending.
25	1	Low risk since being on methadone programme.	About to be discharged from parole.
24	2	High level of financial need linked with offending.	Eight months since last imprisonment.
22	-3	High	Ten months since last imprisonment.
21	-2	Low since being on methadone programme.	Four months since last prison sentence.
21	6	Low since being on methadone programme.	Six years since last prison sentence.
15	9	High but trying to go straight.	Two years since last prison sentence.
Total risk 346	Total needs 82		

As can be seen, the total risk score for the group of self-report re-offenders is higher than for the non-offenders group. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted using Excel that compared the two groups in terms of the risk scale. The results of the analysis showed that the re-offenders group was associated with higher risk:

$F(1, 24) = 5.17$ significance at $p < 0.05$

Table 8.4: Analysis of variance and risk (ANOVA)

Anova: Single Factor

RISK SCALE

SUMMARY

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Column 1 (reoffend)	13	346	26.61538	51.42308
Column 2 (nonreoff)	13	248	19.07692	91.41026

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F-Crit
Between Groups	369.3846	1	369.3846	5.172247	0.032178	4.259675
Within Groups	1714	24	71.41667			
Total	2083.385	25				

Given the weighting of the scores, this supports the lower seriousness of offence type in the criminal histories of the non-offenders group.

The risk table (Table 8.2) also illustrates that a number of participants in the non-offenders' group were classified as high risk, both officially and by their own account, and yet had not re-offended since leaving prison. In other words, even though according to all the risk indicators the measures indicated that a person would be more likely to re-offend, she had not. The individual risk scores for the group of non-offenders was still high (total score 248 out of a possible 390+), and in individual cases was very high, yet the individuals concerned had not re-offended either according to self-report data or official data. In some cases the length of time of desistance from offending was considerable with the longest periods between six to seven years since the last imprisonment. Throughout that period in the community, the official risk indicators had not changed and this is indicative of the heavy emphasis on static factors in the assessment. Clearly, some other factors had to be influencing the behaviour of participants in both groups who had not re-offended despite their risk status.

The group of re-offenders had higher risk indicator scores (total score 346 out of a possible 390+) and a higher level of self-reported risk of re-offending. For the majority, the self-reported level of risk indicated that they had re-offended since leaving prison, but this was not necessarily known to the authorities. Six of the participants in this group rated themselves as low risk of re-offending. There appeared to be a relationship in recent months between desistance from offending and having gained access to the methadone programme, and this will be explored more fully in later findings.

Two of the participants who reported as low risk had had long periods of residing in the community at four and six years respectively, with only isolated minor incidents of re-offending.

The results of the needs assessment indicated lower needs in the non-offenders' group (38 out of a possible 325+) and higher needs in the re-offenders' group (82 out of a possible 325+). The needs scores were submitted to an ANOVA and there were no significant differences between the groups:

$F(1, 24) = 1.14$, non-significant

Table 8.5: Analysis of variance and needs (ANOVA)

Anova: Single Factor
NEEDS SCALE
SUMMARY

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Column 1	13	82	6.307692	91.5641
Column 2	13	38	2.293077	39.07692

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F-Crit
Between Groups	74.46154	1	74.46154	1.139941	0.296287	4.259675
Within Groups	1567.692	24	65.32051			
Total	1642.154	25				

This result tends to indicate that the relationship between needs and re-offending may not be clear and simple in regard to women offenders, based on the need indicators used by the Probation service at the time. It is possible that both groups have diverse needs that are not necessarily related to re-offending. It is also possible, but beyond the scope of this study to test, that the needs indicators are not necessarily appropriate for women.

In concluding the discussion about the results of the risk-needs assessments, it is worthwhile noting that the factors deemed to be associated with re-offending pre-determined the assessments. They did not allow for the consideration of factors that the individual might raise from their own understanding of their offending. Likewise, they were biased towards historic, static factors and towards individual attribute factors. Given the size of the study sample it is not possible to generalise these results. They do indicate worthwhile areas of further research in terms of whether current risk/needs measures adequately reflect women's offending. This study sought to explore whether there might be other factors associated with re-offending and the individual interviews with

released women went on to consider a wider range than those represented in the risk/needs questionnaire.

The first set of data to be reported relating to the consideration of a wider range of factors is quantitative and based on those questions specifically designed for quantitative analysis. Some of these factors were already encompassed by the risk/needs questionnaire, however, a considerable number were new.

8.5 Correlational and Discriminant analyses

The hypothesis that underpinned the quantitative purpose of the study was that there is a relationship between women's re-offending (the dependent variable) and selected independent variables. The null hypothesis was that there is no relationship between the selected independent variables and women's re-offending.

The questionnaire that was administered included a range of multi-answer, self-report questions of which 83 were analysed using Statistica (Stats Soft, 1994). The process of treatment of the variables in the interview schedule is provided in full in appendix form due to the extensive amount of data that would otherwise interrupt the report. Appendix 4 illustrates those questions that were selected from the interview schedule as suitable for quantitative analysis. The questions were comprised of a mix of continuous type questions (e.g. a range of answers from "never" to "very often") and some scaled questions. One participant missed a significant number of questions and was excluded from the sample, reducing the sample to 25 participants for this analysis. The participants who belonged to the re-offenders group were represented by "0" and the non-offender participants by "1".

The rationale for the high number of variables in the first instance was that this was exploratory research and my preference was to include a range of variables not previously associated with women's re-offending. A high number of variables in relation to the size of the sample group invites a more diffuse result. There were high or significant correlations that occurred in the first correlation that measured the same constructs such as types of spousal abuse. A number of these were collapsed into one factor. Where there were non-significant correlations and there was a logical association between variables these were also collapsed. For example, the variable "friends outside of prison" and "friends inside of prison" were collapsed in this way. The variables relating to

childhood victimisation were collapsed into one “abuse” variable. Appendix 5 illustrates how 47 variables were derived from the original 83 with the rationale for collapsing related questions. This appendix shows those variables that remained unchanged. The 47 variables were subjected to further correlational testing. The two groups of re-offenders and non re-offenders were compared in relation to the 47 variables. A significance level of 0.05 was adopted. Table 8.6 presents the comparison between the two groups.

Table 8.6: Correlation of 47 variables with re-offending

Grouping: REOFFEND (offe47.sta)				*	p<0.05
Group 1: G_1:1				**	p<0.01
Group 2: G_2:0				***	p<0.001
	Mean	Mean			
	G_1:1	G_2:0	t-value	df	p
AGE	4.307692	3.384615	1.442889	24	0.16197742
INDEPINC	0.076923	0	1	24	0.32728687
NZQA	0.769231	0.769231	0	24	1
PARDIV	0.538462	0.461538	0.377964	24	0.7087793
PARSIN	0.615385	0.384615	1.161895	24	0.2567031
SIBLINGS	0.230769	0	1.897367	24	0.06987471
PARLAWPR	1.615385	1.615385	0	24	1
SIBLAWPR	1.461538	1.076923	1.070065	24	0.29523447
ABUSE	1.846154	1.923077	-0.132453	24	0.89573005
PARDD	0.461538	0.307692	0.784465	24	0.44044233
POVERYY	0.538462	0.692308	-0.784465	24	0.44044233
PLACED	1.230769	1.538462	-0.917663	24	0.36792581
RUNAWAYA	0.384615	0.384615	0	24	1
ALONEE	0.692308	0.384615	1.589439	24	0.12504939
PARINPUT	1.615385	1.076923	1.585188	24	0.12601312
TEENASS	0.307692	0.307692	2.95E-16	24	1
TEENGANG	0.692308	0.461538	1.176697	24	0.25085578
SUICIDE	0.384615	0.461538	-0.382546	24	0.7054233
SENTVIO	0.769231	0.615385	0.828079	24	0.4157849
SENTMULT	0.538462	0.461538	0.377964	24	0.7087793
REOFFAGE		0.769231		11	
REOFFTIM		0.615385		11	
REOFFVIO		0.727273		9	
FREQOFF		2.153846		11	
VICCONS		0.769231		11	
OFFMONEY		0.076923		11	
PREFVIO	1	0.916667	0.80904	18	0.4290572
PREFPRO	0.375	0.333333	0.181735	18	0.85782177
PREFDR	0.75	0.416667	1.474308	18	0.15767392
IMPULSE	0.5	0.461538	0.184592	23	0.8551673
STOPOFF	0.5	0	3.458323	23	0.00213396 **
LTREL	0.461538	0.307692	0.784465	24	0.44044233
POSREL	0.142857	0.666667	-0.947231	14	0.35958547
NEGRELA	3	5.25	-1.225868	13	0.24199227
RELOFF	0.571429	0.666667	-0.226871	14	0.82380311
DEPKIDS	0.307692	0.538462	-1.176697	24	0.25085578
KIDSOFF	1	1.166667	-0.260562	12	0.79884781
NEGPAST	2.769231	2.692308	0.361158	24	0.72114152
COVEXP	0.833333	0.923077	-0.668084	23	0.51072906
FINHELP	0.384615	0.153846	0.87831	24	0.3884842
FINOFF	0.846154	0.538462	1.732051	24	0.09609991
FRIENDS	0.076923	0.5	-2.082581	23	0.04859981 *
FRIHELP	0.846154	1	-0.66453	23	0.51295926
SUBSTANC	3.818182	3.461538	0.384348	22	0.70441085
DRPRIS	0.3	0.230769	0.359262	21	0.72298651
PSYCH	3.461538	3.769231	-0.53532	24	0.5973548

There were statistically significant differences between the two groups on two variables. These were for the “Stopping someone else from offending” variable where the re-offender group was more likely to have tried to stop someone from offending ($M = 0.5$), and the “social support” variable where the non-offenders were more likely to have social support ($M = 0.04$). Table 8.7 illustrates the two significant variables.

Table 8.7: The two statistically significant variables from the correlation of 47

	Mean G_1:1	Mean G_2:0	t-value	df	p
STOPOFF	0.5	0	3.458323	23	0.00213396
FRIENDS	0.076923	0.5	-2.082581	23	0.04859981

The notion of stopping someone from offending was positively associated with the re-offending group. This may mean that where a released inmate has tried to stop someone from offending she is still associating with active offenders, and this constitutes a risk to her own re-offending.

The construct of social support, which included having friends, was negatively associated with re-offending. The variable of “social support” had been derived from two questions: “When you have problems or difficulties to face, do you have someone to talk things over with” (Q108), and “While in prison did you make new friends?” (Q120). The fact that having friends to talk to was correlated negatively with re-offending may mean that women are able to form positive friendships whilst they are incarcerated, and also that friendships that offer consistent and reliable support are important to the process of addressing re-offending on release.

8.5.1 Results

In order to further explore the findings from the correlational analysis of the 47 variables, descriptive discriminant analysis was used. This type of statistical analysis tries to find the variables that distinguish group membership (Everitt, 1996), in this case between the re-offenders’ group and the non-offenders’ group. Discriminant analysis is a widely-used technique for assessing accuracy of models to predict risk of re-offending. The goal here was to determine whether the “stopoff” and “friends” variables could provide predictive accuracy comparable to popular risk prediction models such as the Violence Risk Appraisal Guide (VRAG; Rice & Harris, 1995). As a result of the discriminant analysis, the two independent variables that were found to be significantly associated with re-offending by the correlational test, were confirmed by the additional analysis.

There was a significant positive relationship between re-offending and “Trying to stop people from offending”, and a negative correlation between re-offending and “having social support”. The following tables (Tables 8.8 and 8.9) illustrate the results of the discriminant analysis. The variable “having social support is denoted by “friends”. The variable “trying to stop people from offending”, is denoted by “stopoff”.

A discriminant analysis was performed using “stopoff” and “friends” as predictor variables. These were the two variables that were associated positively and negatively with recidivism from the correlational analysis (see p.195). Recidivism was the grouping variable.

Overall, the discriminant function including “stopoff” and “friends” predicted recidivism significantly better than chance, Wilks Lambda = .55, approx. $F(2,21) = 8.48$, $p < .01$. The standardised canonical co-efficients and their respective Wilks’ Lambda are presented in Table 8.8.

Table 8.8 Discriminant Analysis Summary (SPSS)

	Standardised Canonical co-efficient	Wilks Lambda
Stoppoff	.932	0.85
Friends	-.531	0.67

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The absolute magnitude of the standardised canonical co-efficient was greater for “stopoff” than for “Friends”. The co-efficient for “stopoff” is positive. By contrast the co-efficient for “friends” is negative. Not surprisingly, these coefficients are in the same direction as the correlational results (see p.195).

The classification results are presented in Table 8.9.

Table 8.9 Classification Table

	Predicted Re-offending	
Actually Re-offended	12	0
	6	6

Overall, 75% of the cases were correctly classified by the discriminant function. The rate of Type I error (false alarms) was 33% whereas the rate of Type II errors (misses) was 0%.

The overall accuracy of the discriminant function can be summarised by the areas under the ROC curve statistic, which is a commonly used indicator of discrimination accuracy (Rice & Harris, 1995). The result was equal to .83 (SE= .08) which indicates that the model was performing at a moderately high degree of accuracy in predicting group membership. This value compares favourably with ROC areas typically reported for risk prediction models, which are often in the range .70 to .80 (Hilton et al., 2004).

The notion of “stopping someone from committing an offence” was a factor which I considered in the design phase might operate as a protective element in offending. The rationale for subscribing to this view was based on the assumption that, having made a decision to stop offending, a participant would be likely to encourage this in others. However, given the result, it is likely that “stopping someone from committing an offence” may mean that the participant continues to have relationships with active offenders, which in turn represents a risk factor.

Other variables showed some relationship to re-offending but not with sufficient statistical strength. For example, a question relating to whether participants belonged to a teen gang (Q43) had some effect but this was inconsistent and dependent on the method of statistical analysis, for example, whether missing responses were replaced by mean scores or not.

The results of the analyses must be viewed with caution given the low number of participants overall, the fact that not all questions were relevant to all participants, and that in some cases some questions were not answered. In conducting the interview, I took a diplomatic approach where participants were reluctant to respond to a particular question or set of questions. This was necessary as some of the questions referred to sensitive material likely to elicit emotional responses from the participants. I was particularly alert to any resistance or negative response to any of the questions. A very few participants were clearly under the influence of illegal substances at the time of interview. The effects of methadone use were also apparent in one case. I did not feel at any time that the participants concerned did not understand the questions and they were able to answer them coherently. However, it did mean that I was alert to a higher possibility of misunderstandings with the individuals concerned. Given that I was responsive to the reaction of the participants and made adjustments accordingly, not all the questions were answered.

In comparison with the numbers in the participant group there was a high number of factors to be considered. Too great a number of factors risked a confused result with less chance of significance. However, within each cluster of similar factors, for example all those related to mental health status, there were individual items that could in themselves have been significant. Combining suicidality with depression under the category “mental health” at the outset of the analysis would have ignored the possible significance of one state over the other. However, a range of variables was logically related as explained earlier and a number shared higher correlations, which meant that it was appropriate to combine them. It was for this reason that some variables were collapsed and this produced the tentative result described above.

The purpose in applying a mixed method approach to data collection was to complement particular methods with other sources of information. The results of the statistical analysis suggested the possible significance of social factors in relation to women’s re-offending. Further analysis and consideration of the descriptive data and qualitative data enabled me to look for similarities and differences between the results from these sources and the statistical results.

Statistical methods offer a particular understanding in terms of the group or groups being compared and the social phenomena being investigated. They do not necessarily reflect the complexity of individual factors and their intra-relatedness (Aron & Aron, 1994, p.60). Qualitative data allows for complementary understanding that reflects individual experience of factors. The following sections begin with reporting the descriptive data results.

8.6 Descriptive Data

Factors already considered in the statistical analysis were further explored with a series of descriptive questions. These questions were designed to explore the factors concerned more fully. For example, where the statistical analysis collapsed the variables under “childhood victimisation” into a single factor, the descriptive data explored each of the types of childhood victimisation enabling the participants to comment on their experience.

One demographic category was excluded from the quantitative analysis that looked for associations with re-offending. This was the Maori demographic category. Exclusion was decided on the basis of earlier consultation in the design process (see Part 3). Sufficient understanding was lacking of what

might constitute a Maori cultural factor and the complex relationship in which this might be associated with re-offending, and, therefore, beyond the scope of this study to explore. Consequently, Maori cultural factors are treated separately and divorced from prediction of reoffending, and reported at the beginning of this section.

The remaining five factors that were further explored in relation to re-offending were:

- 1) Victimisation
- 2) Impact of imprisonment
- 3) Social support and social services
- 4) Substance abuse
- 5) Goals in life

These are followed by a set of descriptive questions that provided a bridge between simple categorical responses and comments to more complex reflections on re-offending. The intention with these was to set the scene for the qualitative life factors question to follow, by encouraging the participants to begin to consider in a more holistic fashion the range of topics covered in the interview. These retrospective questions placed the factors that may have influenced re-offending in the context of the life course. Clearly, some factors had already occurred in childhood as opposed to adulthood. Some types of victimisation had occurred within family of origin whereas other kinds of abuse had occurred in recent relationships. Answers given to a set of items relating to the life course were the basis for an analysis of their impact. Those items from the interview schedule were Q156 to Q158 inclusive, labelled as: “reflection on contributors to offending”, “reflection on protectors from offending”, “retrospective time line of events associated with re-offending”, and “retrospective time line of events associated with stopping offending”.

As opposed to factors that might contribute to offending across the life course some factors may relate to the time immediately prior to an offence being committed. The descriptive data are completed with consideration of possible immediate factors (Q159).

In beginning the reporting of this descriptive section, Maori cultural factors that were omitted from the statistical analysis will be considered first. This will be followed by reporting on the additional

items detailed above. The section will complete with the retrospective questions that led into the final qualitative life factors question. This last question completes the primary data reporting of the study.

8.6.1 *Maori cultural factors*

In keeping with the discussions held with a group of Maori women in the research design process, I designed the questions about Maori culture in the interview without attaching them to re-offending. Rather, cultural factors were considered as a particular set of descriptive factors pertaining to a subset of the participants who may or may not have re-offended. The following description summarises the results of the questions that explored participants’ knowledge of *tikanga* Maori (Maori custom and practice) and what they saw as particular issues associated with being Maori. Any connections with re-offending were described by the eleven participants who described themselves of Maori descent.

The questions on culture touched on cultural links, cultural knowledge and explored the relevance of culture to women’s lives. One section raised questions related to the way that the prison system provided for learning in *tikanga* (custom and practice) and whether participants viewed this as worthwhile learning while in prison. A range of questions was included that related to *whanau* (family), *hapu* (extended family) and *iwi* (tribal) involvement and the degree of understanding of Maori language and major concepts such as *wairua* (spirituality).

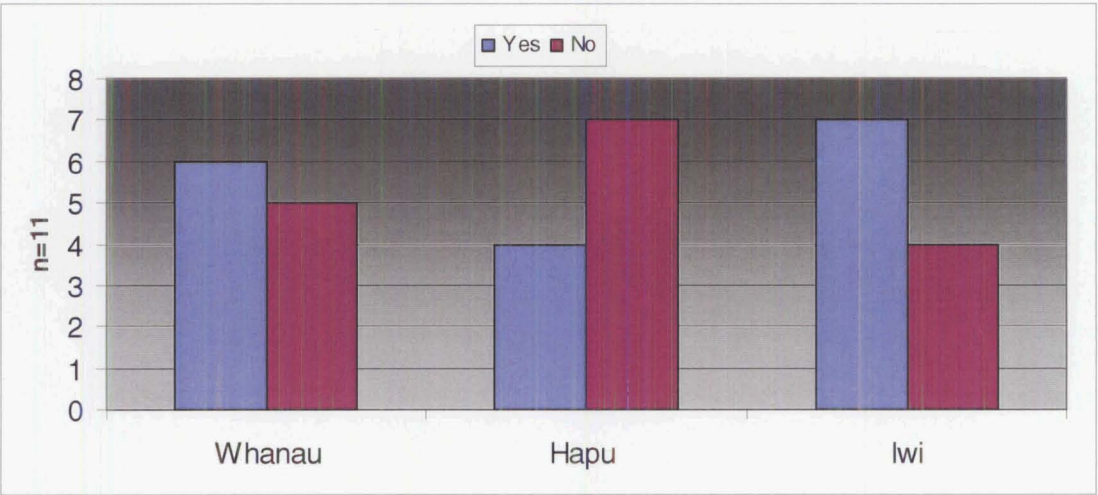
Tribal affiliations are shown in Table 8.9. There were even numbers of participants who identified with North Island and South Island *iwi* and two who identified mixed tribal origins. Three participants did not know their tribal affiliations.

Table 8.10: Tribal Affiliations of participants

Tribal Affiliation	n=11
Ngai Tahu	2
Ngati Porou	2
Tainui	2
Ngai Tahu/Te Arawa	1
Nga Puhi/Te Arawa	1
Unknown	3

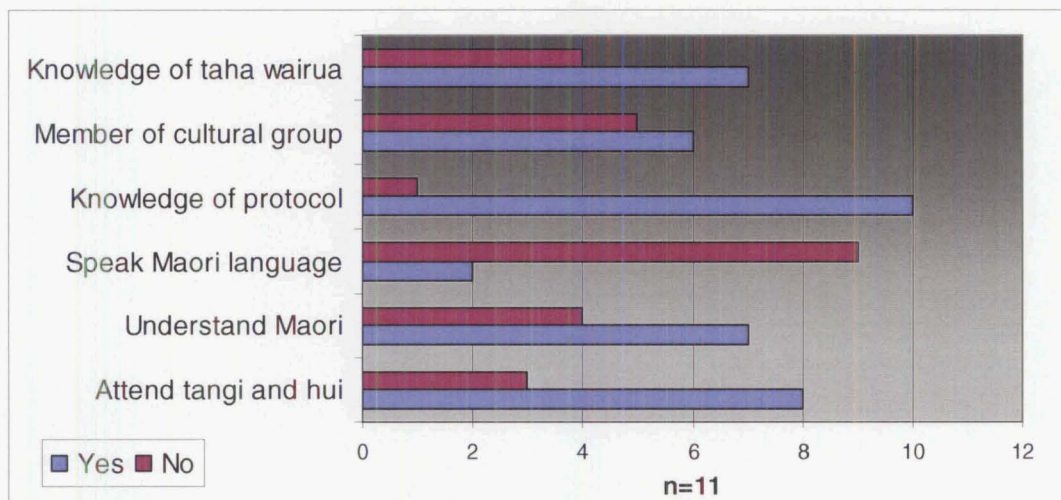
The majority of women who identified as Maori (n=11) were involved with their *iwi* (tribe), slightly fewer with their *whanau* (extended family), and fewer still with *hapu* (other relatives). Figure 8.6 shows the level of participation in these groups:

Figure 8.6: Involvement with whanau, hapu and iwi



There were a number of possible explanations as to why more of the participants reported involvement with their *iwi* as opposed to their *whanau*. One of these was that some women described experiencing abuse within their *whanau* and this was raised by the consultative group as a possible reason for alienation from the *whanau*. Other women described the detrimental effect of their offending on their relationship with *whanau* and this, too, may have impacted on their contact. However, the observance of significant cultural events such as attendance at *tangi* and *hui* might be viewed as more important than *whanau* conflict. On these occasions disagreements may be put aside so that custom and practice are maintained. The majority of Maori participants spoke of attending *tangi*, and *hui* in both the South and North Islands of New Zealand and attending cultural events as a normal part of their lives. Items on other significant areas of custom and practice are illustrated in the following Figure 8.7.

Figure 8.7: Other Maori cultural factors



Knowledge of protocol on the *marae* (meeting place) was reported, as was attendance at important *marae* events such as *tangi* and *hui*. There appeared to be a higher level of understanding of the Maori language, but a lower level of ability to speak *te reo* (the language). Participants were not asked to detail their level of understanding of the language. The question about knowledge about spiritual matters (*taha wairua*) was also not specific although seven of the participants reported understanding the concept of *taha wairua*.

A significant number belonged to a cultural group prior to their most recent prison sentence (six out of eleven). “Cultural group” was broadly defined in response to the prior consultation process where a range of sporting and cultural groups were described that practise from a Maori perspective. The groups included *kohanga reo* (pre-school or literally, language nests), cultural learning groups and sports organisations.

A set of the questions also related to participation in cultural programmes that were available during the participants’ terms of imprisonment. The majority of the women had attended cultural programmes whilst in prison and a small number (three) reported that the *Mana Wahine* programme⁵⁸ was significant to them and had had a lasting effect on them.

Other prison-based cultural programmes ranged from language to *kapa haka* (traditional dance and song) classes. One participant stated that she learnt “most of my *tikanga Maori* (custom and

⁵⁸ This empowerment programme for Maori women inmates was provided by a member of Te Puna Oranga who was consulted in regard to research design.

to learn” about it.⁵⁹ Yet another stated that she was “not there long enough” (in prison) in order to learn as much as she would have wished. The majority was familiar with their *iwi* history and with the process of colonisation.

The comments of the women in relation to their experience as Maori women emphasised their struggle with social disadvantage and with how they overcame this. “I’ve had to fight for everything I’ve got” and “I’ve had a very happy childhood but a lot of family deaths to cope with” were among some of the comments related to adversity. Another participant described how despite feeling “diseased” when she got her son, “I felt complete with a child”. This participant later lost her only child (through death) and struggled once again with substance dependency and criminal associations.

The comments of the three women who attended the *Mana Wahine* programme in prison related to its impact on re-offending. However, it was beyond the scope of this study to explore whether this programme specifically influenced re-offending, rather than generally impacted on the women concerned.

Two of the women spoke of finding out that they had Maori ancestry whilst in prison and of not having had the opportunity to learn about this previously. Knowledge of their culture had not been imparted to them within their own *whanau*. Some spoke of the knowledge about their *whakapapa* (family lineage) becoming important to them on release and how they had found *iwi*-based social services helpful in regard to custody matters and reunification with their children.

The issue of being Maori was perceived as threaded through their lives. It was significant both when they were offending and when they addressed their offending. Cultural knowledge was seen as essential to recovery and comments in relation to cultural programmes available in the prison environment supported this. In other instances, Maori women saw connections with their culture as a potential risk in terms of mixing with other co-offenders and past abusers.

The issue of victimisation was not only referred to by the Maori participants in this study but by the majority of participants overall.

⁵⁹ The Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840, is regarded as a founding document of New Zealand and has come to symbolise the evolving relationship between Maori and European from the time of settlement.

8.6.2 *The role of victimisation*

Whilst the factor of victimisation was not significant from the discriminant analysis it was clearly significant in the majority of the participants’ lives. In other words, victimisation may well be a widely shared factor in women’s offending *per se* and not necessarily associated specifically with re-offending. An alternative possibility is that vulnerability to the effects of victimisation may differ between offender and re-offender groups. It was beyond the scope of this research to explore whether this may be the case. The following section describes in greater detail the participants’ experience of victimisation.

Feminist criminologists have in recent years highlighted the issue of victimisation in relation to women’s offending and re-offending (Bill, 1998; Chesney-Lind, 1997; Katz, 2000; McLellan, Farabee & Crouch, 1997; Widom, 1989). This may be attributed to the high incidence of victimisation recorded in women’s prison populations, coupled with concern about victimisation promoted by the women’s movement. A high rate of past victimisation has been recorded in New Zealand women’s prison populations also (Lashlie & Pivac, 1999; Moth & Hudson, 1999). Similarly, the current study found a high incidence of past victimisation among this group of released inmates. Twenty-three out of the 26 participants or 88% reported some form of childhood abuse. Table 8.10 details the types of abuse described:

Table 8.11: Childhood Victimization

Types of Childhood Victimization*	N=26	%
Sexual Abuse	16	62%
Physical abuse	15	58%
Lack of Affection	17	66%
Psychological abuse	3	11%

*Participants reported multiple types of abuse. These were Questions 27 to 30 inclusive and, 39, 40 & 41 in Appendix 3.

One participant described her experience of psychological abuse as the most difficult to bear. Her view was that she would have much preferred to be beaten than to be constantly “put down”. She saw this as having a more negative effect on her self-esteem as she was growing up than any other form of abuse.

In adolescence there was also a high incidence of sexual abuse reported (Appendix 3, Q42) with 18 of the participants or 70% ($N=26$) stating that they had experienced sexual assault between the ages of 16 and 20 years. For many of the participants this would have been in addition to the various types of abuse they had experienced in early childhood.

In terms of more recent relationships 50% of the participants ($N=26$) had experienced physical assault (Appendix 3, Q80). This question pertained to those participants who had recently been or were currently in long-term relationships.

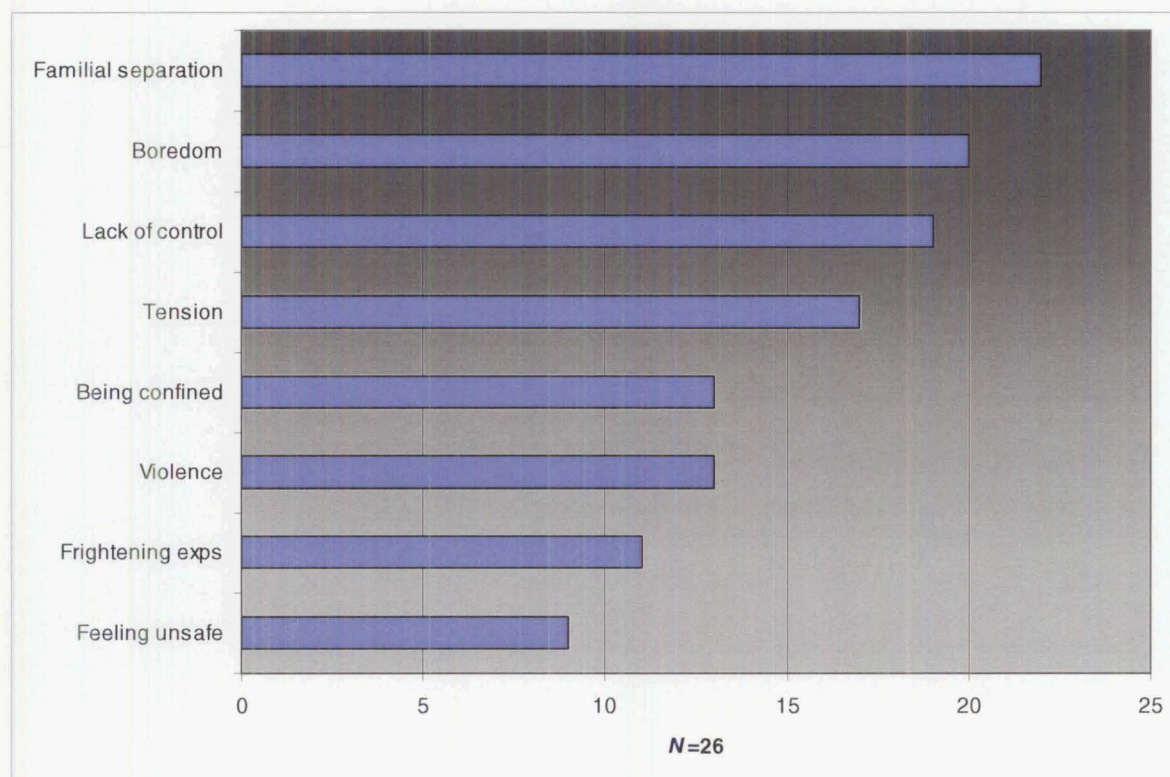
This data supports the notion that victimisation is likely to be a feature of the lives of women offenders throughout different stages of the life course. How this interacts with offending and re-offending is more difficult to establish from the quantitative data. The retrospective and qualitative data to be reported in later sections of Part Four offer some insights into a possible relationship between the variables.

The issue of victimisation also arose in relation to the information concerning the experience of imprisonment and the impact of imprisonment on re-offending. The prison experience was reported as positive particularly in regard to prison programmes, however, a significant number of women also experienced violence and tension in the prison environment.

8.6.3 *The impact of imprisonment*

Violence in the prison context was most frequently related to the behaviour of other inmates. No doubt the level of violence also contributed to the numbers who reported feeling “unsafe” in this setting. Figure 8.8 presents the reported negative experiences within the prison setting in response to Q122, “Were there any things that you found especially hard about prison?” (Appendix 3).

Figure 8.8: Quality of prison experience (negative)

Figure 8.8: Quality of prison experience (negative)

Of the eight conditions derived from Q122, the highest reported negative effect of imprisonment was the distress caused by familial separation. In terms of my own social work practice in the prison, women sometimes described this as a physical pain when unable to hug their children or partners, and this was experienced intensely in the first few weeks of incarceration. However, separation effects for some inmates continued to impact for many years, depending on the length of sentence and on the ability of families to maintain contact.

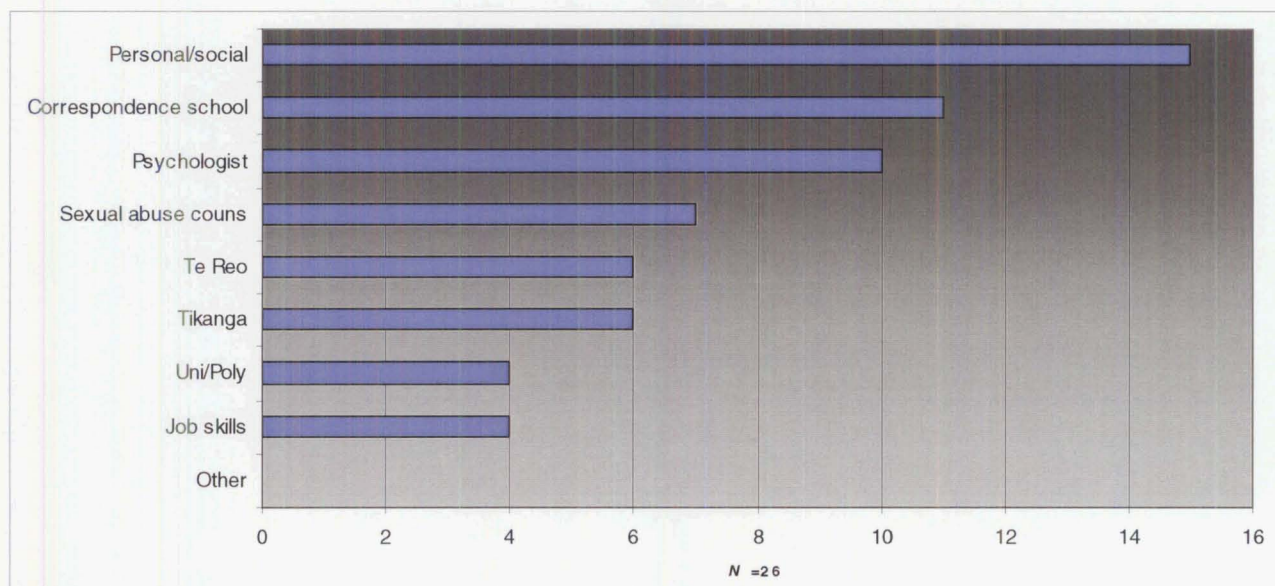
Boredom ranked highly as a negative effect of prison life. Prison industries and programmes⁶⁰ did not appear to be sufficient to occupy many of the inmates' time. Perhaps the feelings of confinement and lack of control were exacerbated by lack of activity and occupation. Certainly loss of control over one's life was described as an ongoing frustration for incarcerated women.

⁶⁰ The interview schedule distinguished between prison industries (cleaning, kitchen work and maintenance) and programmes such as secondary education and short courses offered in learning areas such as personal growth and culture. Programmes included therapeutic psychological and sexual abuse counselling.

inescapable further victimisation. Two of the participants stated that their experience of violence in the prison came to exert a long-lasting effect on their adjustment after release. In terms of dealing with grievances that arose during prison sentences-the data from the questions pertaining to the complaints process in prison (Qs126-130 inclusive, Appendix 3) indicated a high level of suspicion and lack of trust in complaint mechanisms.

Where participants were able to participate in prison programmes, there was generally a positive response to them and in some cases personal change was attributed to some specific types of programmes such as the *Mana Wahine* programme. Figure 8.9 details the types of programmes most commonly subscribed to by the participants during their sentence.

Figure 8.9: Types of in-prison programme participation



The highest level of participation was in the personal/social development area and this encompassed a variety of programmes ranging from the *Mana Wahine* programme with a Maori perspective, to relationship skills. Psychological counselling and sexual abuse counselling also featured in terms of therapeutic programmes. When these three categories are combined they involved the majority of participants at some time during their prison sentences.

At the time of the interviews, it was the policy of Department of Corrections Psychological Services not to provide psychological counselling at the same time as sexual abuse counselling. The rationale for this was twofold; firstly, there was a limited resource and secondly, it was thought that working with two counsellors at the same time could be counter-productive. Sixteen of the participants or 60 per cent had received some form of therapeutic counselling during their prison sentence that was comprised of either psychological or sexual abuse therapy.

During the course of the interviews, four women came to recognise that they needed to resume their sexual abuse counselling. For one reason or another, this had not been pursued after release from prison but the fact of having discussed these issues had prompted some women. In two cases, I was able to assist the participants with contact telephone numbers for the counsellors concerned. The remaining two had kept their contact information.

In summary, the effects of imprisonment on re-offending were difficult to specify. Clearly, in some cases the prison experience had been positive, in the sense that access to some forms of therapy and other personal growth programmes had made a difference. This was offset by negative experiences which involved the prison environment and the behaviour to which the participants were exposed. Separation from children and family had also clearly impacted on some participants and made their adjustment on release more problematic as a consequence.

Intevitably, after completing a prison sentence the participants had to re-establish themselves in the community. The data concerning the period immediately after release indicated that there were particular stressors associated with this period. Access to social services and social support were significant aspects of this immediate adjustment period, and of central interest to this project.

8.6.4 *Social factors: personal social support and social services*

A significant number of questions in the interview related to social relationships and contact with social services (Qs 108-118 inclusive and Qs160-170 inclusive, Appendix 3). This was in order to explore the role that social networks might play in terms of re-offending. The correlational and discriminant analysis had already indicated the possibility that social factors may be significant in influencing women's re-offending, both in regards to risk of re-offending and protection from re-offending. The two sub-items of "stopping someone else from offending" in terms of risk, and of "having social supports" in terms of protection, can be related to the wider arena of social relationships in which women are embedded and that are explored in this chapter. The first factor identifies the risk attached to maintaining criminal associations, the second to the primacy of social support available through a variety of sources.

From this point, the descriptive data goes on to expand on the network of social relationships reported as important to the participants, and on the social services that assisted them after release. In some instances, these contacts were reported as having a greater impact on re-offending than others. Many comments were unrelated to re-offending directly but indicated the significance of social support to the majority of the participants in terms of their overall adjustment after release from prison. Other comments implied that if relevant supports had been unavailable, release situations would have been more difficult and stressful to cope with. Conversely other women

experienced difficulty in accessing and obtaining adequate social support after leaving prison and that this adversely affected their efforts at adjustment.

8.6.4.1 Social supports

The category “social supports” included questions about personal social relationships and about whom participants were likely to talk to when they needed immediate social support. The majority of the participants reported that they had a good social life (16, $N=26$, Q112, Appendix 3) with a significant minority stating that they were a “little lonely” (10, $N=26$).

Twenty-one of the women stated that they had someone to talk to, whilst five stated they had no person to talk to (Q108, Appendix 3). The person most likely to be spoken to (Q109, Appendix 3) was a friend, partner, social worker or parent. A small number placed their probation officers in the category of people to talk to (4, $N=26$).

The majority of the participants described “getting out of the house”, at least sometimes. However, two described “never” leaving their houses (Q111, Appendix 3).

Question 110 (Appendix 3) identified who the most frequent social contact was with. The most frequent contact was with friends (“often”, 14, $N=26$), with parents (“sometimes”, 11, $N=26$) and with family (“sometimes”, 8, $N=26$). Neighbours were rarely spoken to (“never”, 21, $N=26$) and parents were often not spoken to (“never”, 10, $N=26$).

Clearly, the main source of social support appeared to be friends and partners rather than family. Social workers featured before families as a source of personal social support, while probation officers and counsellors featured after families. The lack of connection with neighbours may reflect the short-term nature of the participants’ housing and may also relate to the social networks the participants felt they belonged to and preferred to be engaged with.

8.6.4.2 Social services

The types of social services contacted depended on the particular social needs they met. The Department of Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) (still known as “Work and Income”), was

the most commonly accessed social service. Given that the majority of women were in receipt of state benefits at the time of interview, this is not surprising.

There were two questions that related to the types of social services contacted after release. Question 113 sought generic information about agencies that had been contacted. Question 160 asked participants to specify the most important services they had used following release from prison.

The significance of the economic assistance available through the Department of Work and Income meant that I explored the provisions of the Social Security Act (1964) in more detail. These provisions related specifically to income assistance available to released prisoners at the time of interview (mid-1999).

Table 8.11 details the responses about services most important to participants. *Importance* was related to how the participants viewed relevant social services in terms of assisting them to survive and re-establish themselves. Personal social services such as family/whanau support are included as a social service.

Table 8.12: Social services ranked according to importance by the participants

Social Service	N=26
Department of Work and Income	22
Prisoner's Aid (PARS)	12
Foodbanks	8
Probation	8
Family/whanau	6
Community Alcohol and drug service (CADS)	6
Family Help Trust	6
Anglican City Mission	3
Methadone clinic	3
Chaplains	2
Ka Wahine (halfway house)	2
St Vincent de Paul Society	2
Women's Refuge	2
Limited Service Volunteers (NZ Army)	1
Salvation Army	1

As can be seen, diverse organisations were referred to in response to this question. The diversity was represented not only in both type of assistance received and the respective roles of the agencies concerned.

The Department of Work and Income was stated to be the most important service to participants after release, followed by the Prisoner's Aid and Rehabilitation Society (PARS); Food banks and Probation were the next most important services. Three of the four most important services can be classed as income support and practical aid in terms of the nature of their services. Probation officers may have also played a role in terms of advice and referral to practical support although their role appeared to be primarily that of supervision.

The remainder of the *most important* social services constituted a range of different organisations and individuals that represented varieties of support. The Family Help Trust provided early intervention and intensive support for prisoners' families with young children. This agency was commented on favourably, in terms of the intensive support it offered the whole family unit. The Methadone Clinic and the Community Alcohol and Drug Service (CADS) provided treatment and support for substance dependency. The religious charities such as the Methodist Mission, Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul Society and the City Mission all provided practical aid, information and advice. *Ka Wahine* provided halfway house accommodation and the Limited Service Volunteers course (or LSV) was an army-based residential programme aimed at behaviour change. Further questions raised the issue of how participants may have felt about their contact with social service agencies.

Just over fifty per cent of the participants reported that they experienced some stigma (Q161, Appendix 3) in relation to their dealings with social service agencies (Yes, 12; No, 11, $N=26$). Comments about WINZ referred to staff being "judgemental" and acting "like it's their money". Other comments were positive and referred to how "I thought they'd judge me but WINZ this time really helped".

One participant reported that in her dealings with the Department of Work and Income she felt under pressure to return to work.⁶¹ Her view was that: "I'd love to work - they say that I've been out

⁶¹ The New Zealand Social Security Act was amended in 1998 to allow for the work testing of sickness beneficiaries.

three years and should be stable by now - I say you can't expect a life time of shit to be cured in three years".

A number described how it was more difficult for them immediately after release in that they felt "different" and "a wee bit paranoid". There was "a lot of social bullshit to get used to when you come out". Another commented that "it's hard all the time".

Some described how they had to answer a lot of questions for agencies and "some were quite invasive". Another reported that in order to deal with stigma she "clung to old staff" so that she wouldn't have to repeat her personal information.

In terms of the relative importance of social services to the participants, two reported that their probation officers made a difference to their coping while outside. The first reported that the probation officer "sat down with me as two friends" the other that the Probation officer was "really good".

In response to Question 116 (Appendix 3), the majority of participants were positive about social services staff who they found were friendly, easy to talk to, helpful, reliable and understanding of women's issues. A small group (6, $N=26$) found agencies effective in reducing re-offending.

Eleven of the participants reported that they were provided with information about social services prior to their release from prison (Q 163, Appendix 3, $N=26$). Fifteen reported a lack of information about social services prior to release ($N=26$). The comments of the participants in regard to information about social services prior to release indicate a number of issues which are dealt with in turn.

Firstly, a common theme expressed by seventeen of the participants was that while in prison they needed more information about social services available to them after release. One participant thought that "a place to go to find out where everything was, like housing and help to get into a social life again" was needed. The same participant felt that "even if you're away for a short time it's hard". There was an acknowledgement that "if not on parole, you don't have anywhere to go", and a number of women thought that having appointments and services arranged before leaving prison would have assisted them more. Some women had discovered through trial and error a range

of services and assistance available to them, and thought that this knowledge would have been helpful to them prior to release.

Secondly, the issue of social adjustment following imprisonment was raised in this context also with two participants commenting that “social adjustment was a big problem” and that “social adjustment became a big issue”. This suggested that for some women adjustment problems occurred over a length of time and not just immediately after release.

Thirdly, a mother’s response was to say that she needed a break between imprisonment and resuming the care of her children.

“When I got home I cooked for five people on my first day out. I needed time to get back into it. Good ole ...(reference to self) got back into it. I didn’t feel free. I needed time to relearn what I needed to manage. Some home help or sitting with the kids. I felt controlled on my release. I had to get straight back into it”

Comments such as this highlighted that there were difficulties associated with resuming parenting responsibilities for some women in the immediate days after release from prison. These difficulties were described as immediate adjustment processes and frequently involved access to services.

In response to questions designed to draw on the experience of released inmates as consumers of social services (Questions 160-170, Appendix 3), there were a variety of positive suggestions about how social services better meet the needs of released inmates. These questions were designed to draw on the experience of released inmates as consumers of social services. The following table details the responses to possible improvements in service.

Table 8.13: Participants views on improvements to social services (ranked highest to lowest)

More financial assistance	20
Listening better	17
Understanding the situations you face	15
Not making you feel labelled as an ex-inmate	14
Being prepared to give you a go	14
Accessing resources	13
Treating you with respect	11
Able to assist you immediately	9
Able to communicate with you	9
Able to see you more often	9
Being available over holiday periods	8

More financial assistance was most strongly supported, followed by a range of relationship qualities that could have improved. The issue of stigma reappears in this measure in terms of whether the participants felt labelled as ex-inmates. A significant number thought that the agencies could have improved in “giving them a go”. One participant added a comment that she just wanted “someone to talk to”.

The Department of Work and Income was considered separately, as it was one of the most significant social services available to women after release from prison. The aim was in order to explore specific practical issues that may have been associated with accessing adequate economic support.

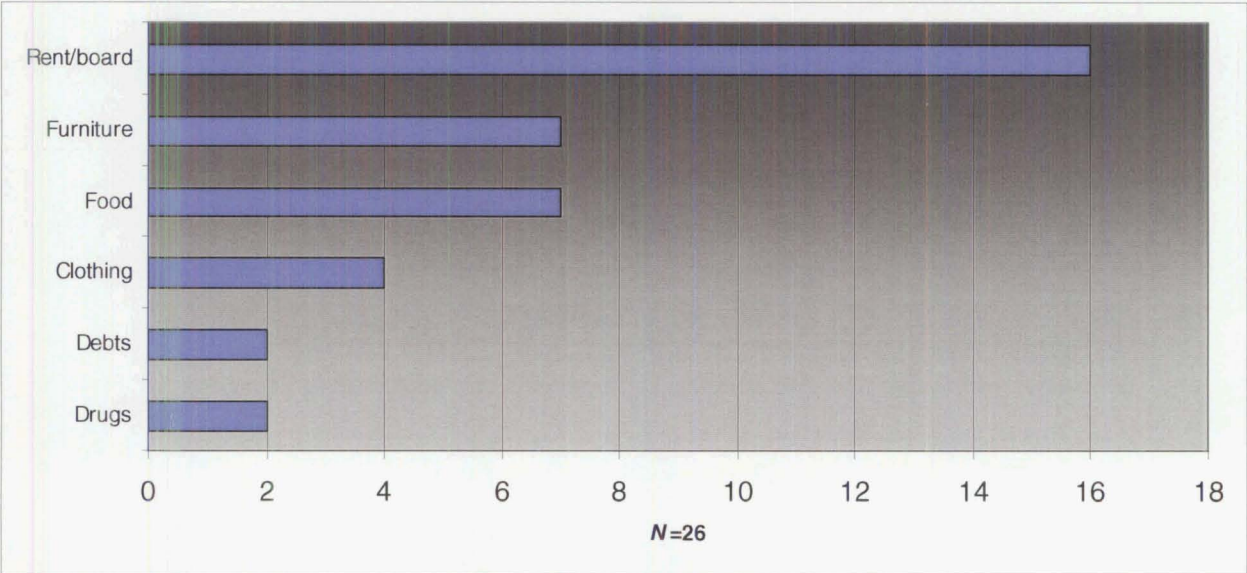
8.6.4.3 Department of Work and Income

The Department of Work and Income provides a set grant of \$350.00 to prisoners on release (Steps to Freedom Grant). This money is funded under the Special Needs Grant programme, Section 124 (1) (d) of the Social Security Act, 1964. The intention of the programme is to make a grant that is sufficient for prisoners to re-establish themselves in the community. The grant is a set rate and any savings that an inmate has in their prison trust account at the time of release is deducted from the

amount.⁶² The grant is available whether the inmate requires a continuing Social Security benefit or not.

Twenty-five of the participants had accessed their “Steps to Freedom” grant. One participant had sufficient financial support from her family in order to re-establish herself. Of the 25, 22 found that it was insufficient to meet their requirements after release. Figure 8.10 shows the major expenses the participants had to meet from their *Steps to Freedom* grant.

Figure 8.10: Costs on release from the Steps to Freedom Grant



Costs associated with rent or board were the main expense followed by furniture, food and clothing. Two participants reported needing to meet the costs of their substance dependency immediately on release.

8.6.4.4 Relevance of social services

In summary, social services clearly played a role in terms of how released women coped in the community. All the participants commented on their experience of social services and many on the problems associated with access and quality.

⁶² It was my practice experience in the prison that inmates understandably tried to spend all their trust monies prior to release.

The link between social services and re-offending was more difficult to ascertain. Clearly, some women made a direct link between the support they had received from various agency personnel and addressing re-offending. For the majority, however, access and use of social services was important in a humanitarian sense, in terms of meeting basic socio-economic needs on release. The amount of legitimate income available to the majority of participants immediately on release was insufficient for their immediate needs. This left this group with a number of limited choices. In some instances a direct connection was made between their financial hardship and the decision to continue offending. Others chose prostitution as a viable means to supplement their income. Overall, the limited means available to most participants on release meant a high level of additional stress, and limited choices, which sometimes meant a return to earlier patterns of offending.

8.6.5 *Substance Abuse*

Substance abuse was explored more fully in the descriptive data. The nature of substance abuse is that it is likely to impact differently over the life course given the differences between women when single and women with dependants. Addressing addiction is likely to reflect relapse and recovery as an ongoing process (Marlatt & Gordon, 1985). Substance abuse had not featured as strongly in the statistical data. Some questions pertaining to substance abuse had been excluded from the statistical analysis because of their complex descriptive nature. Question 62, which was categorical and concerned current drug use, was one of those excluded. As a categorical question this lends itself to chi-square analysis. Table 8.13 illustrates the chi-square table and analysis.

Table 8.14: Substance abuse chi-square

	Offenders	Non-offenders
Using	11	5
Not using	2	8

Result of Current substance abuse chi-square analysis:

$X^2 (1) = 5.85 \quad P < .05$

The result indicated a relationship between current substance abuse and re-offending with 85% of the re-offenders group currently using substances and 38% of the non-offenders currently using. The same *caveat* applies to this finding as applies to earlier statistical analysis in that the small sample

numbers means that this result can only suggest a possible relationship and needs to be considered along with the results of the cumulated data analysis. The question about current substance abuse encompassed all types of substance use and the result does not reflect individual progress that may have occurred in terms of reduction in use or changes in use from one more harmful substance to another that is less so.

8.6.6 *Goals in Life*

The question on goals in life (Qs 153 and 154, Appendix 3) concerned conventional goals as potential protective factors in terms of giving released inmates a purpose in life. In accordance with strain theory, ostensibly if a person has conventional goals then they may be motivated to achieve them. Those goals that are unattainable may create a degree of dissatisfaction that impacts on behaviour.

The majority (23, $N=26$) of the participants described having goals in life (Q153) whether they reported as re-offenders or as “straight”. Only three stated they had no goals in life. Some participants commented favourably on answering this question because it helped them to clarify what their goals were.

The most commonly held goals (Q154) related to family relationships and were made up of maintaining family life, family reunification, and having a family of one’s own. Owning one’s own home, employment, education and training followed as goals.

The common theme in comments on future goals was in relation to resuming the care of children, many of whom had been removed through custody orders. The second most common desire was to become stable and drug-free.

The goals expressed by this group of released women can be seen as representing traditional goals commonly associated with traditional roles of women. There was markedly less interest expressed in education, training and employment goals, which may relate to the limited choices that this group of women described as available to them.

8.6.7 *Reflections on Contributors to and Protectors from Re-offending*

The interview up until this point had asked sets of discrete factors under different categories. The final section of the interview schedule asked the participants to reflect on what they considered were the factors that either contributed to their offending or that protected them from offending.

This set of questions (Questions 157, 158 and 159) was divided into three types. The first was an overall reflection on the factors introduced in the interview schedule up to this point that may be associated with re-offending and desistance from offending. The second was an exploration of factors through various life stages and the impact life events might have on offending. The third was a consideration of clusters of factors that might impact immediately prior to the committal of an offence.

8.6.7.1 Overall factors associated with re-offending and stopping offending

This set of reflective questions invited the participants to make sense of the range of factors overall and to rank them in terms of their significance to them. The major categories were clustered for this purpose under key headings, for example “employment” and “having dependant children”. Participants were asked to rank these categories from “most important” to “least important”.

There were ten contributors to offending listed as follows:

- 1) Offending as a habit
- 2) Lack of employment
- 3) Keeping a partner happy
- 4) Insufficient income
- 5) Lack of emotional control
- 6) Meeting the needs of children
- 7) Loneliness and isolation
- 8) Needing money for drugs
- 9) Desire for things
- 10) Helping friends or family out

The notion of “offending as a habit” was a factor that I had had described to me in social work practice. Inmates would sometimes comment that there were programmes for addiction to substances, but that they thought they had an addiction to offending, particularly shoplifting. The majority of the categories above can be linked to the major categories of the interview schedule. Participants were asked to rank them on a ten point scale from “most significant” (10) to “least significant” (1), in relation to re-offending. The results of each category according to their numerical weighting and their frequency are shown in Table 8.14.

Table 8.15: Self-Report Contributors

Self-report contributors	N=26
Insufficient income	23
Offending as a habit	14
Lack of emotional control	14
Needing money for drugs	14
Loneliness and isolation	13
Helping friends or family	13
Desire for things otherwise couldn't have	12
Meeting material needs of children	11
Keeping partner happy	8
Lack of employment	7

The most frequently self-reported response to single factors that contribute to re-offending was to the category “insufficient income”. Twenty three of the participants reported this as “most significant” in their offending. Related to insufficient income was “meeting the material needs of children” with eleven participants reporting this as a most significant contributor. Clearly, this contributor can only apply to those participants with children (n=15) and this represents the majority or 73% of this group. When these two items are combined under an economic domain this becomes one of the most strongly supported domains.

The social domain is made up of items about *social isolation, helping family and friends and keeping a partner happy*, and when these are subsumed into one domain it matches the economic domain in terms of strength. These two domains are followed by the two items that pertain to behavioural issues. These are that of “offending as a habit” and “lack of control”. The remaining items are less well supported but nevertheless in terms of individual offenders may be significant.

The questions about *contributors to offending* were followed by a series about *protectors from offending*. The participants were asked to consider the factors that had been traversed thus far in the interview and to assess which ones were important in helping them to stop offending.

The following is a list of the categories selected as protectors:

- 1) Having dependant children
- 2) Having a non-offending partner
- 3) Having sufficient income
- 4) Having non-offending friends
- 5) Having interests and hobbies
- 6) Managing one's addiction
- 7) Having employment
- 8) Having a supportive non-offending family
- 9) Being able to satisfy wants
- 10) Having a satisfying social life

Some of these were arrived at as logical opposites to the contributors such as “having sufficient income”. Others were introduced as probably associated with the contributors. For example, the category “having interests and hobbies” may have offset loneliness and isolation. Responses to these questions were ranked in similar fashion from “most significant” to “least significant”. Table 8.15 shows the results of the positive weightings under each category - that is, in terms of how often the category was associated with protection from re-offending to the participant.

Retrospective reflections on what had influenced *re-offending* and *stopping offending* elicited these responses that were based around the participants' life experience. A number of participants had not been offending for many years and for this group the exercise was historical. Their responses may well have been influenced by the time lapse between their last period in prison and the length of time since release. The group of non-offenders had the benefit of hindsight in reflecting on past re-offending, whereas the current offenders were still immersed in the immediacy of their offending.

Table 8.16 Protectors from Offending

Protectors from Offending	N=26
Dependant children	21
Sufficient income	21
Managing addiction	18
Non-offending friends	16
Non-offending partner	14
Interests and hobbies	14
Employment	13
Supportive, non-offending family	13
Satisfying wants	13
Satisfying social life	10

The higher number of responses in relation to the effects of substance abuse may reflect the fact that this question was retrospective for some women. They may have reported in the interview elsewhere that they were no longer affected by substance abuse at the time of interview and this was reflected in the earlier data. However, at this point they were reflecting on what may have influenced their re-offending over a lengthy period of time, hence the greater number of responses to this category.

There were also a higher number of responses in relation to the protective influence (on re-offending) of having children in this question as compared with earlier data. This may be explained by the fact that some women had had children removed from their care. For other women it may have meant that they hoped to have children in the future. Both groups saw the impact of having children as protective from offending.

A further reflective exploration of factors associated with re-offending traversed the interaction of events over the life course. The extraction of factors as single and isolated events in a person's life provides a particular perspective of how different variables may impact on a person's development. In order to consider how factors may interact over the life course another set of questions was asked that asked the participants to place significant life events which they perceived to be associated with re-offending and protection from re-offending on a time-line representing age transitions.

8.6.7.2 Time line of significant events that contributed to and protected participants from re-offending.

This study hypothesised that some life events for women may impact over a period of time and may mediate other more immediate factors that may be associated with re-offending. The time-line was designed to further explore the complexity of what may contribute to women's decisions to commit an offence, both in terms of immediate needs and in terms of long-term needs.

The life events were drawn from the substance of the interview schedule where issues such as sexual abuse or partner abuse had been raised. The events were grouped under specific age periods. Clearly some factors were more relevant at particular periods than others. Hence, the question of the effect of having children was more pertinent to the reproductive years of the participants' lives.

8.6.7.3 Age-related events contributing to offending/re-offending

The following lists the life events that may have contributed to re-offending. These are derived from the relevant sections of the interview schedule.

1) Physical, psychological or emotional abuse

2) Loss of an important person

3) Joined a gang

4) Peers into crime

5) Relationship with an offender

6) The loss of family/whanau support

7) Truanted from school

8) Ran away from home

9) Became angry

10) Siblings into crime

11) Parents into crime

12) Sexual abuse

13) Alcohol and drug abuse

Within different age groupings, different life events were reported as more strongly associated with offending.

Years 0-12

Within this age group the experience of sexual abuse was most commonly reported as associated with offending. This was followed by running away, then truanting, losing family support and alcohol and drug abuse. Physical and psychological abuse and “becoming an angry person” were next with “loss of an important person” less strongly supported. These factors can be seen as associated with entry into offending given the age at the time. However, this is not to say that some life events occurring at this stage in a person’s life may be perceived as contributing to offending throughout the life course.

Years 12-18

Within this age band the factor of having criminal associates was most commonly reported. This was followed by “running away”, and “having a relationship with an offender”. Sexual abuse was next, followed by “loss of an important person”, “becoming angry”, “alcohol and drug abuse”, “truanting” and “joining a gang”. There was little support for the impact of parents and siblings’ criminality at this stage and some support for the impact of physical and psychological abuse.

Years 18-25

“Having a relationship with an offender” featured more frequently in this age band as associated with re-offending. This was followed by “alcohol and drug abuse”, “having criminal associates” and “losing an important person”. These were followed by the category “becoming an angry person”. A small number referred to “sexual abuse” at this stage while there was no reference to some other age-related events such as “running away from home”, or “truanting”.

Years 25-40

There were significantly fewer responses in this age band overall. The greatest number or four referred to “relationship with an offender” and the “loss of an important person” as significant to them. “Alcohol and drug abuse” and the category “other” accounted for the next most commonly referred to factors. This may be explained by the fact that a number of participants may have perceived the earlier events in their lives as having an enduring effect on their re-offending. There

may also have been a reluctance to disclose the factors that might have been affecting them at the time of interview.

In the category of “other” in this age band, reference was made to the traumatic experience of a violent murder, lack of money and offending to pay the bills and buy food, abuse by husbands (two references) and “pleasing parents”, as explanations for ongoing offending at this age.

Summary

There were marked differences in the factors associated with contributing to offending at different ages in the women’s histories. These differences are likely to be partly attributable to age-related events. Retrospectively, at the earliest age group, “sexual abuse” was most strongly supported as a factor associated with offending. Indeed, it was reported by 14 of the participants ($N=26$) making it the most strongly supported factor at any age group. Running away, truanting and lack of family support followed as significant.

The last three factors also featured at age 12-18. At this age they were accompanied by “involvement with criminal associates”, with “gangs” and by “relationships with offenders”. In other words, the participants identified negative formative experiences which for many of them led to involvement with crime in a variety of ways during adolescence.

As adults, relationship with an offender persisted as a risk factor while the factor of criminal associates and association with gangs reduced. By this age, the experience of personal loss was reported by the participants as impacting on their re-offending.

8.6.7.4 Age-related events protecting from re-offending

Protection from offending or what helped the participants to stop, was also explored in relation to the same age bands. As with the earlier set of questions some factors were more relevant at different ages than others. The following lists the protective factors drawn from the interview schedule the majority of which had already been associated with protection from offending.

- 1) Personal support
- 2) Having a good role model
- 3) Supportive family

- 4) Cultural networks
- 5) Having children
- 6) Drug and alcohol treatment
- 7) Social service support
- 8) Getting too old for the lifestyle
- 9) Probation support
- 10) Having a sponsor
- 11) Religion
- 12) Counselling
- 13) Belonging to N/A/ or A/A
- 14) Other

Years 0-12

There were fewest responses for this age range, which may be attributable to the fact that the majority of participants had entered active offending later in their lives. Therefore, desistance was more likely to occur in later ages. Clearly some participants viewed their early childhood experience as impacting on offending. This was reflected in their perceptions of elements that had been missing from their childhood that may have impacted on their ongoing offending particularly in regard to the quality of familial relationships.

The factor of having constant personal support “through the good times and the bad” was seen as most protective in this age band. This was followed by “having a good role model”. A small number referred to “supportive family” as significant.

Years 12-18

Within this age band “having a good role model” was seen as the strongest protector from offending closely followed by personal support. Having drug treatment, which included Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous was the next most strongly supported factor. A minority reported supportive family, cultural networks, and counselling as significant.

Years 18-25

Consistent with the first two bands having personal support featured most strongly as a protective factor in this age group. This was followed by the factors of “having children” and “social service

support". Having probation support, a supportive family, drug treatment and a good role model all followed with a small minority referring to counselling, and cultural networks as significant.

Years 25-40

There was a higher response rate to factors associated with protection from offending in this particular age group. This may reflect the fact that the majority of the participants were within this age group at the time of interview and, therefore, may have been able to relate more immediately to protective factors.

The age-related factor that featured in this band of the notion of "getting too old for it" was most strongly supported. This factor had not been introduced earlier in the interview. Fifteen of the participants saw the fact of maturity as most influential on their behaviour.

"Getting too old for it" (offending) was followed by having children, obtaining drug treatment and personal support, as the next most protective factors reported by the participants. Probation support, supportive family and having a good role model were supported by a significant minority. The smallest number of references was made to the remainder of the factors.

Summary

The common factor as making a significant impact supported throughout the life history, was the notion of having personal support through good times and bad. This suggests that the quality of a supportive relationship was important to the participants. In relation to this, some spoke specifically of valuing their relationship with their probation officer and of trying to ensure that in successive court appearances they could be allocated the same officer. They saw this partly as relieving them from having to re-establish a relationship and also from having to disclose personal information to another potential stranger.

In child-bearing years, having children was clearly perceived as a protective factor. It is possible that due to the fact of having children, women in this age group are more likely to need various kinds of social support. Social support was seen as significant particularly from age 18-25.

The factors of personal support, social service support, having a good role model and probation officer support can be seen as falling under a super-category of "social support". When these factors

are grouped under a super-heading of “social support” it becomes the most significant self-report cluster of factors associated with protection from offending.

Obtaining drug treatment, including involvement with Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous (N/A and A/A) was more strongly supported in the latter. However, at ages 12-18 and 18-25 it was also considerably supported. A possible reason why this factor did not feature as strongly in the correlational and discriminant analyses is because a significant number of the participants were no longer dependent on illegal substances and were reporting on earlier stages in their lives.

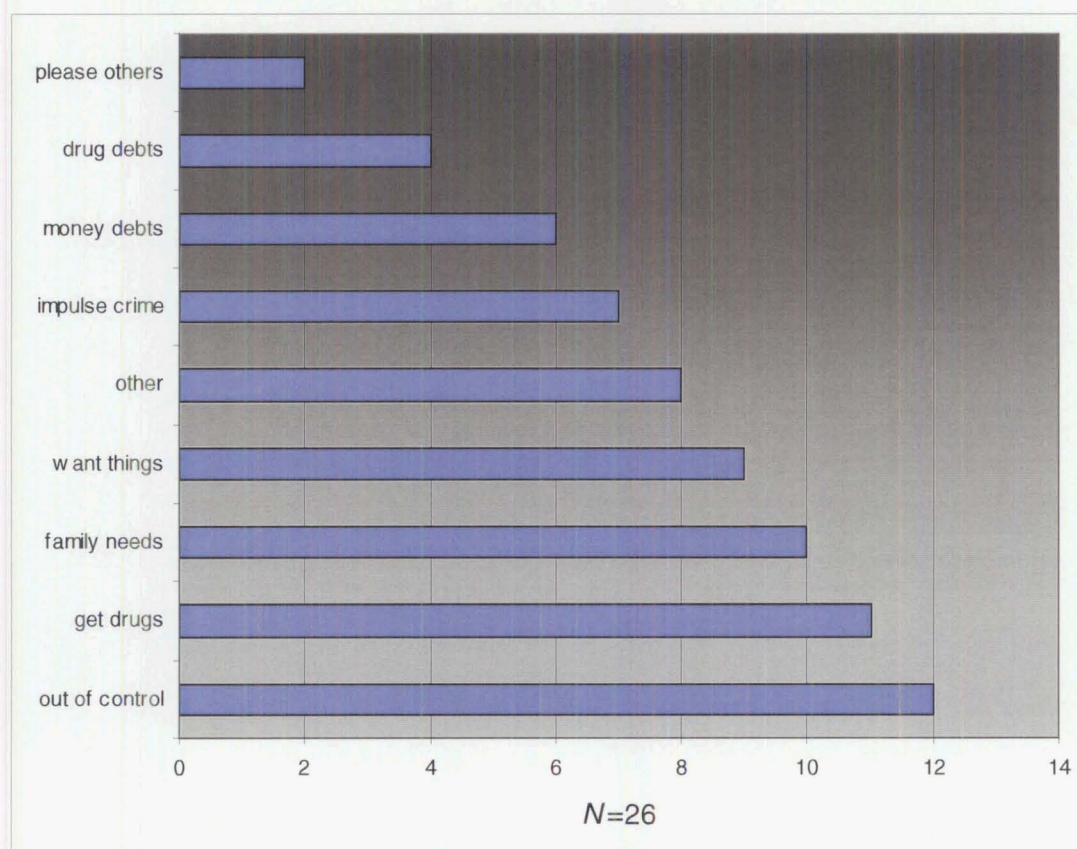
This is significant for criminological research as, if current or immediate factors alone are taken into account, then significant historical ones associated with particular stages in an offender’s life may be overlooked.

8.7 Factors Immediately Associated with the Last Offence

Zamble & Quinsey, (1997) particularly suggest that there may be factors that are immediately associated with offending that may not be considered by either researchers or offenders in considering historic offending. This recognises that there may be offence-particular elements that impact at a specific time and place.

The list of factors that may have been associated with the most recent offence that the participants could remember is represented in Figure 8.11. In the category of “other” the following explanations were given for the offence:

- 1) Felt family was threatened
- 2) Caught with an offensive weapon which was carried for protection
- 3) Caught partner with another woman
- 4) Husband had a cocaine habit
- 5) Needed money (non-specific about purpose)
- 6) Protecting daughter
- 7) Due to prolonged violence of husband
- 8) Scared of “hanging out” (drug withdrawals)

Figure 8.11: Immediate contributors to offending prior to last offence

The majority of participants reported a number of factors influenced them immediately prior to an offence. Each factor was analysed according to the frequency with which it appeared in the participants' responses. This does mean that the result in terms of each individual needs to be seen as representing a mix of factors, rather than a single salient feature immediately prior to committing an offence.

The most strongly supported factor was the notion of being "out of control". Some women related this to the influence of specific substances such as benzodiazepines at the time of the offence. When the notion of committing an offence "on the spur of the moment" is included under the notion of being "out of control" then impulsiveness becomes stronger still in terms of immediate offending behaviour.

The three factors of "money debts", "family needs", and "wanting things" that may be classed under economic needs were the next most strongly supported. Economic reasons also featured in the category of "other" where the need to obtain money was specifically described.

“Getting drugs” and “meeting drug debts” were also strongly supported. When these drug-related factors are combined along with the reported behavioural effects of specific substances then drug-related factors clearly impacted significantly prior to the last offence after economic reasons.

These factors are distinguished by the fact that they explain offending in terms of immediate behaviour. What they do not explain is the rationale for the choice of an illegal means to satisfy socioeconomic needs or impulsivity. In other parts of the interviews the participants spoke of prostitution as a viable economic means to increase their income. Arguably there may be other ways that impulsiveness may find expression. The data concerning immediate contributors to offending indicate that there are additional, offence specific factors that impact at the time of the offence. How these interrelate with the previous range of historical, contextual and underlying factors already traversed is beyond the range of this study. However, in order to understand the full complexity of women’s re-offending this element of offence behaviour also warrants consideration.

8.8 Summary of Findings from Quantitative Data

The demographic data that began Part Four of this study described a population of released women offenders with a significant level of economic and social disadvantage. The majority of this group had low levels of formal education and vocational training, low incomes, minimal assets and comparatively high debt levels when compared with income levels.

The majority of the participants or 88 per cent were classified as “recidivists” at the time of the interview in that they had more than one sentence of imprisonment. In the majority of cases (77%), the last offence that the participants had been sentenced for was a non-violent offence. Thirty per cent of all the women were sentenced for violent crimes for their most recent offence.

In terms of the official measures of risk of re-offending, the group of self-reported non-offenders (following last release) had an overall lower risk and needs score, while the self reported offenders group had an overall higher level of risk and needs. However, within each of these groups there were significant differences between self-report measures of re-offending and official measures of re-offending, suggesting that there are limitations on the application of this type of set formulae in

regard to risk measures. The variables introduced in the interview schedule ranged wider than those prescribed in the official measures of re-offending applied at the beginning of the interview.

The correlational and discriminant analyses that began the quantitative analysis for this study found two significant factors, the first of which was associated with contributing to re-offending, and the second related to protection from offending. The contributor related to “stopping someone from committing an offence” was a factor which interestingly enough I considered in the design phase might operate as a protective element in offending. The rationale for subscribing to this view was based on the assumption that, having made a decision to stop offending, a participant would be likely to encourage this in others. However, given the result it is likely that “stopping someone from committing an offence” means that the participant continues to have relationships with offenders, which in turn represents a risk factor.

The second, protective factor was the notion of having social supports. A range of social supports associated with a variety of social services were traversed in the interview. These were explored more fully in the ensuing report of the descriptive data.

Both the above factors relate to the “social” domain and to the network of relationships that the participants had engaged with. The question became whether the theme of social relationships would permeate through the descriptive data that followed the correlational analysis, or whether a stronger emphasis on other factors would emerge. The descriptive data went on to not only link with the correlational and discriminant analyses in terms of the impact of social relationships, but also to add new dimensions to re-offending. In many instances, this data represented areas of shared concern to the group as a whole regardless of their re-offending status.

High levels of victimisation in early childhood were reported by the participants and their descriptive accounts in some cases made harrowing listening for the interviewer. For the majority the effects of this early traumatic experience were long lasting. Early childhood abuse was followed by a high incidence of sexual assault experienced in adolescence (70%, $N=26$) and for many women this represented additional trauma to that which they had experienced earlier in their lives. In adulthood, and in more recent relationships, fifty per cent ($N=26$) had experienced physical assaults with their partners. There was an overwhelming sense of a pattern of accumulated experience of violence in the lives of the participants.

When these figures are considered across the life course, victimisation in a variety of forms can be seen as a significant feature of women offenders' lives. Arguably, this issue relates to re-offending because both groups of women were affected by it. Perhaps there is a qualitative difference between the kinds of victimisation and the ability to cope with its effects that distinguishes the group of re-offenders from current offenders.

Social support also featured in the descriptive data as significant to the participant group as a whole. Whereas the correlational analysis had suggested social supports as a protective factor in terms of re-offending, it was clearly important to non-offenders also. In other words, there is an emerging sense that regardless of offending status this group of released women shared a variety of needs that were necessary to their adjustment on release. Social support may well be a protective factor but it is likely that it also helps to reduce the overall degree of stress and material disadvantage that released women experience.

Socioeconomic need is a recurring theme from the descriptive data on social services. In terms of re-offending, having insufficient income was seen as a most significant risk factor. Conversely, having dependent children and having sufficient income were perceived equally as strong protective factors.

When the notion of re-offending was placed within the context of the life course then early childhood victimisation was most strongly associated with offending. During adolescence, "criminal associates" became more significant along with "running away" and "having a relationship with an offender". In adulthood the most significant contributing factor was "having a relationship with an offender".

Over the life course, some protective factors shared prominence in each retrospective age group, whereas others were age-group specific. The common factor was the notion of having personal support or someone to talk to "through the good times and the bad". The quality of this supportive relationship was clearly significant to the participants - suggesting a non-judgemental type of interaction with a supportive other. One participant described in comments how she enjoyed seeing her probation officer, who made her a cup of tea as a "friend".

In early child-bearing years having dependent children was seen as a protective factor, along with personal social support, having a good role model and supportive family. Some Probation officers were also seen as protective factors.

Substance abuse treatment became more significant as a protective factor when women were aged 25-40. This suggests an issue of readiness in terms of substance abuse treatment related to age and maturity.

In terms of factors that may contribute to re-offending immediately prior to an offence being committed, a number of behavioural and personality factors emerge. Here, the participants described impulsivity and lack of control as the major contributing factors. These were followed by economic reasons for committing an offence.

The next phase of the interview shifted from quantitative to qualitative methods. The last, qualitative question asked for a broad reflection on re-offending by putting re-offending within the wider context of the participants' own life narratives. This required reflecting on their life experience as a whole; using the information they had already provided earlier in the interview by giving them the opportunity to try to make sense of the interrelatedness of factors discussed thus far. This was also a means to encourage the participants to raise other factors that may have been unique to them and not covered by the schedule up to this point. It was a means to respect each individual participant's story in a way that allowed them to determine what was significant to them and what was not. This was the stage in the research where the "stories" could begin to infiltrate the "numbers" to see whether the individual stories differed markedly from the impression that the numbers were beginning to create.

Chapter Nine

Qualitative Findings

9.1 Introduction

During this section of the interviews I took notes while the participants spoke. As much as possible, the notes followed what was said. Where it was not possible to note all the detail of a sentence, the key words were noted and were expanded before the end of the interview. Participants had the opportunity to check whether the notes accurately reflected what they wanted to say. Confidentiality concerns required that the participant accounts remained unidentifiable. The life events described were unique and individuals could be more readily identified if their narratives could be linked through the text. Therefore, no numbers or names are attributed to the individuals concerned.

The interviews were analysed both by factors and by themes based on participants' accounts. Clearly, having completed the interview to this point, the earlier factors considered were likely to exert some influence on what the participants commented on. There were two striking aspects about these results. The first is that as a result of factorial analysis a number of categories appeared to have greater significance to the participants than the quantitative results indicated. The second aspect was the interconnected nature of the factors across the life course which I found could only be appreciated with thematic analysis. The complexity of the interconnections illustrated the importance of recognising the unique, individual facets of each case as part of the overall analysis. The results in relation to contributing factors in the life history will be reported first.

9.2 Contributors to re-offending in the life history

The following lists the main factors and themes that recurred in the life histories that were associated with contributing to re-offending:

- 1) Victimisation, including sexual, physical and psychological abuse
- 2) Offending itself
- 3) Relationships
- 4) Running away
- 5) Family of origin
- 6) Economic factors

- 7) Substance abuse
- 8) Imprisonment
- 9) Peers
- 10) Dependent children

The issue of victimisation that encompassed sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse was most prevalent in the participants' narratives. Early victimisation was not described as an immediate precipitant of re-offending, but rather as an underlying factor that led to a series of consequences that in turn led to offending. Sometimes lack of affection and attention and derogatory comments were described as key elements in this process.

The way I was treated by my father played a big role in my life. He was verbally abusive and I developed low self esteem. I felt shitty about myself. My whole outlook was negative. My father was a drinker and used to drown his sorrows. I took on the wife role [her mother left when she was young] listening to his problems from the age of ten years. He was short-tempered and used his tongue to put me down. He thought he helped my self-esteem but I found his sexual comments lowered my value in myself. He saw women as sexual objects and still does. I found that devaluing. Only when I got help did I realise that this was wrong. I started running away from home and running with older offenders in pubs – drug users etcetera from an early age.

In this case, the participant spoke strongly about her experience of her father's attitude towards her and the role demanded of her early in life. She explained her early running away as a response to this, and it was the running away that exposed her to older offenders and to substance use. The influence of alcohol use on parental behaviour was mentioned by others also. In other situations, lack of affection and attention was described as engendering anger as a child.

When I was a child I got no affection and attention at home and I was constantly put down and felt useless. In fact I did well at school without really trying. I feel angry about the loss of potential. I became an angry person when I was young and began offending at age ten years. I was doing burglaries.

In another case, it was the notion of trying to achieve acceptance in the family that was described as precipitating offending.

My offending was about being accepted by my family. I've dealt with this by getting away from them. If I went home I might fall back into it and I'm not prepared to try. When I went home my mother would go on about what she'd done for [other family members] and I would feel guilty. I'd want to help – it didn't matter how I did it. When anything came into the house there was never a question about where the money came from – NEVER. Fraud was easy and it became a habit.

In this case, the participant began offending later in life and she described the factors that influenced her to begin offending as linked to her ongoing need to provide for her family.

In the above case, offending was passively condoned, but in other cases childhood experience was directly related to learning offending behaviour from a parent, which was accompanied by intimidation and punishment.

My father from when I was six to seven years old took my brothers and I to thief. He expected me to take what he wanted and without getting caught. I would get a beating with the jug cord if I failed. I began offending when I left home at 11 years of age. I began shoplifting. I've carried on shoplifting ever since.

Sexual abuse was described by some participants as precipitating a sequence of events that also led to offending.

I was brought up in a traditional family where you were seen and not heard. A close family member abused me but it was kept in the family. I couldn't talk to my parents about it. I began running away when I was a teenager. I came across offending by other teenagers at the time. We used to hang around the square. I began using LSD at this time.

For the next participant it was the experience of sexual abuse and her family's response to it that helped her to explain her anger as a young person.

I was abused from six to nine by a close friend of the family. When I told them it was my fault, "you dirty little slut" and to this day my father won't accept what happened. From that day in I started getting beatings from my father. I was sent to see a psychologist in ... he's [the psychologist] since been up on child abuse charges.

In another case it was the experience of domestic violence coupled with sexual abuse led finally to the removal of the participant from the family home and her introduction to offending.

Mum was caring and hard working and supported us children. Things went wrong for me. I don't know why I went off the rails. My mum was stabbed by my father when she was seven months pregnant and I saw that when I was six. I saw mum chased through the paddocks with a machete. I didn't like any man who came into my mother's life. They were good to us but not to her. I rebelled about that. I was abused by the second partner of my mother and this was traumatic. Mum has said to talk to her about anything but I didn't. My mother caught my stepfather taking me away – she was hurt I didn't tell her. She stopped the relationship with him after that. I was ten years old. I began to run away from home and was put into foster homes but then I would run away back to my mother's house. Through running away I went to Borstal and met up with kids doing drugs early on. I began using dope and heroin. I was dependent on heroin from the age of 11 or 12.

In other instances, economic factors and wanting things was described as early motivation to offend.

I offended by shoplifting at eight years old. I did it because we were poor – we had to wait. My mum couldn't afford lots of things. She didn't have enough for us. We had nothing all our lives – others had lots. I'm going to take it. I knew my mother would never get things.

In another case, wanting to have things was accompanied by the need for acceptance.

I first did shoplifting at the age of ten to 11 years to get attention. When I was six to seven years old all my friends had Barbie dolls – I didn't have one- I stole the money from my father for one. I began running away from home at 12 years of age and stole from my parents. Then I began getting into drugs and using and I needed money. When my father

drank he was nice—when he was sober he was a cunt. When I saw my parents happy on drink—I wanted to be happy too.

The impact of early victimisation on *re-offending* as opposed to *beginning* offending was less clear. One participant made a direct link between her sexual abuse and her entry into fraud. However, the issue of early victimisation was described more often as having a life long influence on the participants.

The category of “running away” was for nine of the participants a corollary to early victimisation. They described how the effect of childhood maltreatment was to leave them with no option but to run away from home. This exposed them to life on the streets where they met other young people who were abusing drugs and alcohol and committing theft in order to survive. The consequence of this entry point became years of dealing with their substance dependency, criminal offending and abusive relationships.

One particular participant described how her relationship with her stepfather was characterised by physical and emotional abuse to the point where she felt she had to leave the family home at the age of fifteen. Her mother refused to support her application to the Independent Youth Benefit⁶³ which resulted in her resorting to stealing a bicycle in order to get money to be able to buy food. This participant continued to live on the streets until she formed a relationship with another older male offender.

Descriptions of the influence of family of origin were also connected with entry into offending. Two participants referred to offending as part of rebellion to over-rigid family/whanau decision-making. Psychological and emotional abuse was keenly felt, leaving one participant feeling “useless”. Another two women described increased separation from their family and growing affiliation to other offenders as contributing to their offending.

Violence and control experienced in later relationships was more likely to be directly linked to recent re-offending. Perhaps the fact that sexual and other forms of abuse had been briefly raised

⁶³ The New Zealand Social Security Act requires evidence of a breakdown in the family relationship before an Independent Youth Benefit may be granted.

earlier in the interview prompted the participants to recall subsequently more of the specifics about their experiences.

... used to beat the kids and I had to step in between him and the children. I was too scared to leave and I didn't trust that the police would get there in time. I think I'm an anxious and a stressed person all the time because I'm still afraid of violence if anyone raises a voice. ...was a drug dealer and I had to do things for him. I thought my selling drugs would keep my ex-husband happy. He's got a cocaine addiction and he easily puts \$65,000 up his arm. He's been inside a lot. My family always expected me to die and they didn't want anything to do with him. I ended up with addiction to valium. While I was in prison he sold our home and my share of the money was invested with a lawyer. He spent all my share by forging my signature on cheques and giving them to the lawyer.

Other women described in graphic detail violent incidents that they had either been victims of, or had observed, and of the injuries they had sustained.

I got depression because of physical and emotional abuse from him and the sleeping around. Lots of connecting things happened. My partner sexually abused me and I didn't realise that until I started counselling. I tried getting away lots of times. He threatened me and my family. He harassed me until I went back.

In another case, domestic violence was also directed towards the children. In this case, both psychological and physical violence was described.

My first long term relationship was with He was an offender and into drugs. He was a violent and possessive man. He was cruel and played head games. He used to make me do the crime. I had to do it or I'd cop it. He would stand outside the door and make sure I did it. If we both got caught he'd make me take the charges. This was partly how I lost the children. I was in hospital a few times with injuries especially when I was pregnant. He's put all the children in hospital. Because I stayed with him was beaten and I went for help. I told it all to the doctor. The doctor promised that CYPS would take me and the children away. They took the children away but left me with

Not one person helped me with charges against.... He would hunt me down. I was unable to leave. I didn't have supports. I went to Women's Refuge. He found me there.

Another participant described the effects of living with domestic violence and abuse for many years before she planned her partner's murder.

I committed my first and only offence when I was ... I'd been married for 12 years. My partner was moody and had a bad temper. I hoped this would wear off after we were married. It didn't. We had two children. He was physically violent to me. He was verbally violent to the children. He tried to drown our eldest child in the bath when she was eight years old. Our youngest child bit him. This violence came out of the blue. I told my mother about it.

He'd be quite normal a lot of the time and then he'd do something violent and bizarre. He was cruel to the animals - witnesses verified that in court. He'd beat the animals with alkathene he blinded the cows with it.

In the home he'd get upset by the children being noisy this would trigger off outbursts of violence. I had bruising but I was scared to go to the doctor. He threatened me with a loaded gun.

This participant's defence lawyer tried unsuccessfully to argue battered woman's syndrome. She needed corrective surgery for injuries inflicted by her partner, and this took place whilst she was serving her prison sentence for life, which at that time involved a seven year non-parole period. Unlike the majority of the other participants, this was a one and only offence and involved one lengthy period of imprisonment.

The category of relationships was frequently concerned with issues of power and control. In this life history question, 11 of the participants described the experience of violence and control exercised by a male partner that had a direct impact on their re-offending. Since this question was reflective and retrospective, the women were commenting on the effect of these relationships on their re-offending regardless of whether they had more recently stopped offending.

The category of “offending” related to the manner in which offending itself and different types of offending exerted an influence on re-offending. Some participants described early shoplifting as a type of offending they became very good at, and for two women this continued to be an effective means of providing for their children. Shoplifting in childhood years was sometimes related to poverty and the desire for food and “nice things”.

Drug dealing was also described as a means to provide for the needs of children by topping up weekly income. In another case drug dealing meant maintaining a lifestyle to which the participant and her children had become accustomed and which gave the children opportunities they would not have had access to otherwise.

Re-offending in order to meet the needs of personal addiction was also described by three women. The type of offending was not specified and reference was made to significantly reduced re-offending once access to the methadone programme was assured.

Drugs were a major factor in my offending. I needed money for drugs. I married another addict and offender. He pulled me down. I had my own house at 18 years and sold it for drugs.

I began using needles and my offending began with needle use. I needed enough to buy drugs and so I was shoplifting and selling drugs.

Offending was also described as a “habit” that was hard to control. This was particularly in regard to shoplifting but was also mentioned in relation to burglary. One participant reported that she liked the “adrenalin rush” from offending.

From teenage years I was mixing with other criminals doing burgs, cheques and cars. Drugs became full on and I needed to feed my addiction. I liked the excitement of the adrenalin rush from offending.

Re-offending was described as influenced by other economic factors. For example, constant financial pressure exerted by children and families was cited by two participants as contributing to their fraud offences. Another participant referred to the financial pressure immediately after release

and how this impacted on her re-offending. Financial pressure was frequently associated with lack of other types of support.

One time I left prison I had no furniture in a flat. I saw the psychologist once a week. I couldn't cope with day to day things. I think that lack of support meant I went back inside. There was too much to cope with. I tried to contact people who were supposed to support me and they weren't available. They were on holiday – my calls weren't returned [forensic services and Comcare]. There wasn't a lot available.

In this account, the participant described her psychological support as almost irrelevant while she had no furniture in her flat. This suggests that on release a more co-ordinated response might reduce the level of stress that participants experienced.

The effects of imprisonment were mixed. One participant referred to the fact that she had decided after weighing up the penalties that she thought she would “get away with it” anyway. In other words, imprisonment did not have a sufficient deterrent effect to stop her offending. The remaining comments on the effects of imprisonment referred to how the experience made one participant “feel labelled as a criminal” and another commented on the negativity directed at her whilst she was in prison.

Where the participants explained their entry into offending, and then their ongoing offending in their life histories, violence, abuse, and control were strong features of their experience. The impact of these negative aspects of their lives was to limit their life choices. Running away from home meant loss of access to education and training and the need to find illegal sources of income. The experience of abuse and control in relationships in adolescence and adulthood further limited their life opportunities.

9.2.1 *Prevailing themes of contributing factors*

It was evident from the participants' life history accounts, that familial relationships and relationships with other offenders dominated their thinking about offending. This can be related to the quantitative analysis, which found that association with current offenders was a contributor to re-offending. However, this qualitative data expands on the notions of what “associations” or

relationships may mean. It raises the question of the influence of gender on the relationships women form and how women's experience of victimisation both in early childhood and as adults appears to have a lasting effect on the quality of relationships during the life course. In turn, the quality of relationships then appears to influence decisions that are made in relation to both offending and re-offending. The next section deals with the factors that helped the participants to address their offending during the life course.

9.3 Protective factors in the life histories

The issue of substance abuse treatment featured strongly in terms of protection from re-offending. This is perhaps not surprising since substance abuse was earlier indicated as contributing to re-offending. The following lists the factors (from the life history recording) associated with stopping offending.

- 1) Alcohol and drug treatment
- 2) The role of significant people
- 3) Therapeutic counselling/psychological treatment
- 4) Having children
- 5) Readiness for change
- 6) Effects of imprisonment
- 7) The Limited Service Volunteer programme
- 8) Employment
- 9) Peers
- 10) Education

Seven participants referred to the changes they were able to make once they had access to methadone treatment. At the time of the interview two of the participants had had to wait for some months after their release from prison in order to regain a place on the programme. They described how they resorted to large amounts of offending while waiting for a place. While they had not completely desisted from offending at the time of interview they were proud of the level of reduction in their offending and the fact that this had helped them to meet their parole conditions.

Methadone has been essential. Once I was on the methadone while I was pregnant, and my partner died and I went hard out using. Before getting on methadone [most recently] we

both [participant and partner] tried to commit suicide together. The only reason we failed is because the beam broke. We were kept on the wait list and the wait just kept our offending going.

This suggests that methadone treatment needs to be ongoing in a way that meets the needs of clients who have significant emotional crises in their lives that mean they require additional support. Another participant referred to a similar experience where other issues needed to be resolved as well as her substance dependency.

Methadone has been essential. Other things have had to come into place as well. When my brother died I went back to using. I feel able to deal with bad feelings now. We help each other with the bad feelings and appreciate the good feelings.

In another case, methadone treatment offered the participant the opportunity to be able to deal with other significant issues in her life.

I think I needed to accept the need to change and to recognise the effects of my father. The methadone allowed me to do some change and to look at myself without working so much on dependency first. Once I realised some of my problems and accepted them I've been able to work on dependency and it's been much easier. I've been able to reduce off methadone right off. I'm committed to a Polytech course and methadone has helped me to realise a career – by coping in life as a real person instead of a false person.

As the accounts illustrate, methadone treatment was associated with other necessary motivational factors in order to make personal changes. In the following, having a child was described as part of the driving motivation to adhere to a treatment regime.

Having ... [child] has been important in addressing my addiction. It's helped me to make changes to stick to the methadone and not to steal. I'm very careful about friends and money and my actions now because of... [child]. I want to be able to help kids now.

A number of women referred to the impact of having children in that they became aware of the need to make changes in lifestyle, not only involving drug treatment. Having children was also described

as providing the motivation to change altogether. In some instances, having children altered the nature of the participant's offending.

I began to change with my first child and changed to dealing only to manage my drug problem. When I had kids I stopped burgling because I realised when I burgled how much hurt it could cause.

I'm very motivated to go straight. I want to make sure the children are happy.

The loss of my baby was a big turning point for me – I'd already been on methadone but after that I wanted to reduce and turn my life around. I am determined to do whatever it takes for me and my children. I want to get my daughter back. I have access that's taken me four years to achieve.

I have a new man he's very supportive and a new baby [six months old]. I've got a lot to look forward to. I'm seeing the children and I hope to get them back some day. I have to prove myself with my baby. They say I'll never get them back.

Those participants who had children frequently had dealings with care and protection services, whether this was through temporary care arrangements or more permanent custody actions.

I couldn't see any point in addressing my addiction or offending while the children were taken away.

In this instance, the participant felt that the children would not have been returned to her if it were not for the intervention of a Maori social services agency. She found that treatment through a "12 Step" programme was effective and that meeting other people in recovery was a major factor in her own progress. This enabled her to demonstrate her "worthiness" in having the children returned.

As well as children other significant people helped motivate change. The category of "significant" people encompassed individuals who were part of organisations or who were part of a participant's personal life. Sometimes significant others were encountered as part of a recovery process. The

Family Help Trust was specifically referred to as having assisted with obtaining drug treatment and also with engaging mental health support.

After my last imprisonment ended in 1998 I had help from the Family Help Trust and began to deal with my drug problem. [Before that] I've had a terrible fight trying to get help for me. No one would help.

A strong, supportive gay relationship was cited by three women as helping them to go “straight”. One comment was that “I feel valued, loved, I see a future”, and another that the other woman had made the “difference”.

A new relationship with a man who had helped one of the participants to stop street work had helped her to change. The fact that he was willing to help with her children and to insist on her receiving respect had helped her to stop offending.

My new partner is helping to insist that the children show some respect. He's helped me to come right. He was a client when I was working the streets. I worked the streets because I came out [of prison] and had to look after my grandson. I started the drugs again when I went back to the streets. He's insisted I stop working the streets and he shares things around the home.

In another account, reference was made to a prison manager at one of the local prisons having had a lasting influence on the participant. She felt that his belief in her had been more important to her than her probation officer's support. Other positive influences from imprisonment were the discovery that there were other choices in life apart from the cycles of abuse and offending some women were only familiar with. Good, supportive relationships with prison officers had had a lasting effect on some women, particularly where they had been encouraged to deal with their sexual abuse.

Relationships with peers was also referred to as important by one participant who distinguished between having the “right” crowd as opposed to the “wrong” crowd around her.

Therapeutic relationships formed during imprisonment and continued after release from prison also impacted on stopping offending. Three participants felt that their ongoing counselling for the effects of sexual abuse had helped them to desist from offending. They spoke highly of their sexual abuse counsellors who had continued their service to them after release from prison. Two participants specifically referred to psychological counselling as having helped them.

I learnt all about personal development issues and abuse when I was in prison and counselling helped. The biggest thing to stop for was my child....and not being on pills.

Psychological counselling has helped with my confidence. Sexual abuse counselling has helped me to heal and move on from it. I began ACC [sexual abuse counselling] in my first sentence and then continued in my second sentence. My children are now helping with my decision to stop offending.

The notion of readiness to change was also referred to in terms of having the will to stop offending. This was described as the need to want to go straight before change could occur.

I see jail as a positive thing. After my last lag I didn't want to come back. I used all the education there was. I was sick of doing jail. This had to do with myself – not jail. It's how you use it. Some people go into jail and come out the same as before.

Employment, training, and education were mentioned by very few of the participants in these reflections. On the rare occasions when a participant had been able to achieve in these areas they were described as life changing, positive elements.

9.3.1 Prevailing themes of protective factors

The two strongest themes associated with stopping offending were access to substance abuse treatment, particularly the methadone programme, and the role of significant people. Substance abuse treatment was not as prominent in the quantitative data. This may be partly attributed to the fact that some participants who had accessed methadone treatment did not report that they had stopped offending completely. They did report that their level of offending had reduced. For this

reason they would have been classed as re-offenders. This does raise the question of the complexity of offending where significant reductions or changes in offending patterns may occur.

The strongest overall theme to emerge from the comments in relation to stopping offending related to relationships. If therapeutic relationships are regarded as “significant”, along with relationships with children, prison staff and peers, then a strong theme emerges of the potential positive impact of these. This finding is not dissimilar from the quantitative finding of “social support” as a protective factor. Nor is it dissimilar from the descriptive data concerning the importance of personal support. What the qualitative life history has indicated is that it is the quality of relationships with others that is relevant and also that recovery from the deleterious effects of abuse significantly impacted on personal change.

In addition to the specific factors that the participants described as associated with offending and re-offending, there were also descriptions of trying to deal with hardship and adversity. Whilst the purpose of this study was an exploration of women’s re-offending, the level of overall social disadvantage and experience of personal trauma soon became apparent. There is a sense in which the distress that the participants described in relating their life experience transcended theoretical classifications of offender and re-offender. The debilitating effects of childhood abuse, poverty and lack of choice meant that these issues were frequently of more central concern to the participants. There was frequently an overriding sense of loss in a variety of ways and lack of opportunity that defined the lives of the participants.

Comments such as the following denoted some of the reflections from the life histories.

“it’s been a struggle – a struggle getting things without getting in debt”

“the children and I lost a lot from life. We lost over nine years of separation”

“I didn’t get help and I didn’t talk about it. Looking back I was probably crying out for it”.

The criminal justice system of which I was a part in terms of my employment in prison was/is preoccupied with classifications. A bureaucratic system requires processing of people into different categories and characteristics are applied to particular sub-groups. However, once “offenders”

begin to talk about their lives, their connection with communities of origin and everyday social problems, their narratives begin to challenge the classifications applied to them. The relevance of these classifications to their community experience becomes questionable.

As one of the most influential bureaucracies in the criminal justice system in terms of notions of offending and classification of offenders the Community Probation service necessarily featured in the participants' lives. The next section of data to be described is the results from the secondary data of the Probation files. These contained records of observations of the participants by their respective Probation officers at different times throughout their offending history. The results are positioned at this point, reflecting the order of data collection. Recording from these files immediately followed the primary interviews.

9.4 The Community Probation Files

Access to the Probation files of 25 of the participants was made available at a Christchurch local office. One file could not be located at the time of the interviews. On the rare occasions that files were held in other centres in the South Island, they were sent to Christchurch so that I could access them. A condition of accessing the files was to view them at an office of the service. Photocopying was not permitted, however, I was able to make detailed notes from each file.

Note taking was assisted by the fact that the reports were already structured according to a set format that included categories that were deemed to be associated with offending. The files were made up of pre-sentence reports, Judge's sentencing notes, and case notes from interviews with clients. Since the time of the interviews in 1999, the assessment of risk of re-offending and of criminogenic needs has markedly altered the appearance of Probation Service files.⁶⁴

In the majority of cases, the files represented a life history of the participant that bore much similarity with their own accounts. The Probation records in many cases detailed major traumatic incidents that had marked the participants' lives. Where the participant had been involved with the Probation Service since they were sixteen years of age comments about family background were common. Other significant events such as sexual abuse, the loss of significant others or the influence

⁶⁴ This change occurred after the introduction by the Department of Corrections of IOMS or the "Integrated offender Management System" in 2000.

of new relationships, were also commented on. Given that involvement with the probation service meant that either an offender had been charged with an offence or offences, or had been sentenced to a community-based sentence, it is not surprising the reports and notes were primarily concerned with contributors to offending. There was, overall, very little reference to interventions that may have worked or the positive progress of offenders, unless the case involved a positive discharge.

9.5 Factors from the Probation files associated with re-offending

The following list of factors represents those most commonly referred to in the Probation reports in descending order of frequency of occurrence in the records. Since, in many instances, the reports began in early adolescence, they reflect comments about the entry into offending in addition to comments specifically related to re-offending. Both types of comments have been included because in many cases it became difficult to distinguish what was referred to as contributing to an entry into offending and what was related to ongoing offending. Where specific connections were made between factors and re-offending these have been noted.

Contributors to offending/re-offending:

- 1) Influence of family background
- 2) Effect of victimisation: sexual, psychological, physical abuse and neglect
- 3) Impact of mental health issues
- 4) Influence of recent relationships
- 5) Economic factors
- 6) Low educational attainment
- 7) Immediate reasons for offending
- 8) Substance abuse
- 9) Impact of loss and grief
- 10) Influence of dependent children

The influence of family background was the category most commonly referred to in the reports. This category comprised of factors such as different types of abuse experienced in the familial context in addition to neglect and abandonment. Family background was usually referred to in relation to entry into offending, as it was the time in the participant's life when they began to come

to the notice of authorities such as the Police and Probation service. Occasional reference was made to “all the family known to the probation service” or “brothers known to the probation service”.

Victimisation extended to abuse and violence that was experienced throughout the life course. Where abuse occurred in familial environments it was related to entry into offending through its effects. Other forms of abuse were committed by friends of the family or neighbours, and less frequently by strangers. The early effects of abuse were sometimes related to running away and exposure to other offenders and survival on the streets. Running away was also associated with state intervention through temporary care in either Kingslea, the Christchurch residential centre for young people, borstal training or corrective training. Another effect of childhood sexual abuse reported by the participants was early dependence on substances in order to alleviate the distress of abuse. The record of drug and alcohol abuse frequently began when the participant was 12 to 13 years of age and sometimes coincided with running away.

Throughout the accounts of family history and life history of the participants, reference was made to the experience of loss and grief. This was associated at times, with the loss of two or three partners. In one instance, three partners had committed suicide. In other cases, clients had lost siblings when young and close friends had died suddenly. The loss of a parent was also mentioned as impacting on the participants.

In common with earlier comments of the participants in relation to becoming an angry person, the records noted that aggression had been observed to be expressed at an early age by some participants. References were made to anger specifically directed towards a parent.

Socioeconomic status of probation clients was also referred to in reports. Historically, probation officers were required to furnish a *Statement of Means* to the Court at the time of sentencing. These detailed the level of debt and the limited income available to the participants. In some instances, reference was made to the fact that a benefit had been stopped leaving the client without means of support. Specific reference was made to the stopping of a Domestic Purposes Benefit which had left the parent and child without legal income. Providing for family members was occasionally referred to as a motivation for offending. References were made to clients being “short of money” and being “sick of being poor”. Being in continual financial difficulties was also sometimes referred to.

Drug and alcohol abuse were usually related to either the presence of substance dependency or to failed treatments. There was reference to the officer's inability to access the methadone programme for clients and the impact this had on their offending. There was one reference to the failure of the methadone programme and the fact that the participant was back "drug seeking".

Other mental health issues also featured in the reports. These were related to psychological reports that had been required for a participant or to reports that had been provided by schools or other agencies. Attempted suicides were referred to, as was depression. Post traumatic stress disorder was raised specifically in regard to the effects of childhood abuse. There was reference to a range of other disorders including eating disorders, social phobia, anxiety, and psychotic behaviour. Presumably some of the diagnoses would have been reported by the mental health system as part of pre-sentence information gathering, although this was not clear from the file records.

The Probation files also recorded immediate reasons for offending as if this particular phase of an offence was important for understanding motivation. Economic reasons featured more strongly in these notes. Comments were made such as "bored, depressed and wanted money for drugs and clothing" and that it was "understandable that she resorts to crime when she had so little money and a benefit stand-down period". There were less frequent comments about feeling "excitement" from offending and how offending was now "compulsive".

When the comments that relate to relationships are viewed together over the life course, the theme of the significance of relationships emerges. This began with descriptions of family of origin with the quality of familial relationships and the impact of victimisation. It continued into adolescence when comments were noted about the impact of "mixing with the wrong crowd" and parents referred to the "undesirable influence of associates". During adolescence, gang memberships and affiliation also became an issue.

During more recent years, considerable mention is made of the impact of abuse and control in intimate relationships. Examples of remarks concerning these are as follows:

Succession of abusive partners

Husband married to at fifteen years abuses alcohol and drugs and is verbally and physically abusive.

Thefts coincided with either imprisonment or release of partner
Convicted for a theft that partner committed
Violent relationship, fearful of partner
Has been assaulted by partner

There is a sense in which the themes of violence and control in relationships pervade the life histories.

The theme of gender and the particular role that women may adopt in intimate relationships is also referred to specifically in relation to power and control. This may be implied in comments of the officer or in some instances be explicit. The following selection of remarks illustrates these concerns:

Husband's lifestyle has in my opinion contributed to her inability to date to rescue herself from this pattern.
Domestic violence orders have not provided protection.
It seems probable she was under his influence at the time.
Things appear to go well during separations from partner.
Partner is jealous and possessive.
Violent partner tracks her down.

The data from the primary interviews did not so explicitly reveal the element of the role of gender in relationships. It can be argued that it is unlikely that the participants themselves would analytically approach their relationships in terms of the role of gender. However, their comments in the descriptive data concerning contributors to offending suggested that having a "relationship with an offender" presented as a significant risk to them. The probation reports take this element a step further by making more detached observations about the dynamics of these relationships in terms of the role of gender. There was no single mention of the participants being in control in their relationships. The descriptions add the notion of women as fulfilling wider traditional gender roles in terms of ability to determine the quality of their relationships. Of the data up to this point, this offered a new emphasis which continued in the final section of the reporting of the interviews with a number of informed experts familiar with practising in the criminal justice area.

9.6 Interviews with Informed Experts

The secondary research on probation records was followed by unstructured interviews with seven informed experts in the triangulation phase of the study. Their organisations of origin were:

Probation	3
Prisoner's Aid and Rehabilitation Society	1
Ka Wahine Trust	1
Alcohol and drug treatment	1
Family Help Trust	1

All seven were experienced practitioners with an accumulated total of one hundred years of service in their respective organisations working with women offenders. One probation officer had twenty-five years of experience with the service at the time of interview. Five of the practitioners were female and two male.

Interviews took place at the practitioner's workplace in a private space set aside for the purpose. The interview began with open questions inviting reflection on women's re-offending. Prompts were based on the major categories and themes which had already emerged from the data at the same time allowing for new information to arise. I used a checklist of categories to ensure that I covered each area with each informant. Space was specifically provided at the end of the interview for individual reflections.

The practitioners were, without exception keen to assist with the research and were interested in its purpose and in the results. I undertook as part of the consent process to provide a means to report back to them at the completion of the research.⁶⁵

There was a large quantity of data obtained as a result of these interviews, portions of it extending beyond the brief of the research. For example, the probation officers were keen to discuss changes in the organisation and how these had impacted on their ability to supervise probationers.

⁶⁵ Those informed experts still in the Christchurch region were invited to a Social Work Department seminar, University of Canterbury which reported preliminary findings in June, 2002.

9.7 Informed experts' comments on contributors to re-offending

The narrative begins with Table 9.1 that illustrates the frequency with which reference was made to specific categories associated with contributing to re-offending. This will be followed by reporting the factors that were associated with protection from re-offending.

Table 9.1: Contributors to Re-offending

Contributors to Re-offending	
Economic factors	48
Relationships with Offenders	34
Alcohol and drug abuse	21
Social services (lack)	20
Imprisonment (lack of deterrence)	20
Victimisation	18
Mental health disorders	16
Associates and gangs	14
Stigma	12
Family circumstances	5
Children (risk)	5
Sexual orientation	5
Motivation	4
Employment (lack)	4
Education (lack)	4
Housing needs	3
Communities of origin (associates)	2
Age (risk)	2

Rather than isolating a single result from the data above, the results of the descriptive analysis need to be considered along with the quality of the responses to the different categories and, particularly by this stage of the data gathering, in terms of the already emergent themes and categories. The interpretation and analysis of the data as a whole had begun to represent an interwoven and complementary set of information about the phenomenon of women's re-offending. The themes relating to what contributes to women's re-offending had started to assume a pattern of shared responses accompanied by elements unique to specific lines of enquiry.

The overwhelming number of responses from the informed experts was weighted in the direction of the impact of economic factors as contributing to re-offending. The particular concerns expressed by the informants were similar to concerns raised earlier relating to poverty, debt status, the cost of living and the needs of sole parent mothers and children. In terms of offending behaviour, poverty expressed itself as the gap between income and the cost of living, and the steps that women took in order to increase their income. In some instances, reference was made to “layabout” partners who contributed little to household expenses. In other instances, women were reported as offending in order to support other mothers and children:

Some women do offend for especially financial reasons – especially those who have re-offended for years. They see children with no shoes or kai [food] in the cupboards so they go and burgle or thief not for themselves but to keep a mother and her children looked after.

The costs associated with immediate release from prison were distinguished as a high risk period with the “Steps to Freedom” money referred to as inadequate to meet release needs. The cost of bonds and rents was linked with the inability to obtain advances of benefit in order to meet housing costs.

As a result of the economic pressure, it was not unusual for women to resort to prostitution. This was described as inherently risky and sometimes resulting in further substance abuse:

Prostitution is very common. Often the pressure of waiting for the benefit is too much so they go on Manchester Street⁶⁶ or the boats, it's a dangerous time that immediate period of coming outside.

These comments were based on reflection of years of practice of supporting and supervising released women. Clearly, for some practitioners the socio-economic situation of their clients had been an ongoing problem, not just with the same client but between clients. One commented that financial pressure continued well after release as a long lasting issue. Another was of the view that “the number of women who commit crime for their own and their kids’ survival is pretty phenomenal”.

⁶⁶ Manchester St is the ‘red light’ district of Christchurch

The next most frequently referred contributor related to relationships with offenders. When this category is combined with criminal associates and gang affiliation, as has been my approach with earlier data, the emphasis on relationships matches that of socioeconomic pressure.

Here, the reference to the impact of violence and power and control was explicit and compelling. A common reference was to “an eternal problem of violence against women and abuse of women”. Another informant stated that:

My overwhelming impression when looking back over the years is being struck by how generally unhelpful women offenders' partners were.

There was description of how some women drifted towards abusive partners simply because they found relief in having someone “willing to stay with them long enough”. Others stated that “many forgive their boyfriends for the most scummy things” and how “there are some beautiful, heart of gold people, and it’s sad seeing just a little spark that keeps getting crushed and the potential to develop and grow gets lost”.

The informants expressed considerable empathy for the situations that their clients found themselves facing and there was a sense of helplessness about their ability to assist their clients. The impact of fear for women in gang relationships was described, as was the anxiety and paranoia that came to mark the lives of women surviving abusive relationships. Abuse was not described as confined to heterosexual relationships but also to lesbian partnerships formed either on the “inside” or “outside” of the prison environment. Power and control issues were observed as a feature of both types of relationship.

The influence of associates was referred to as a high level of risk associated with “people popping in all the time” and “meeting old friends from the past”. Gang membership was perceived to be particularly unhelpful and was observed to “never” constitute a protective factor in terms of women’s offending. The difficulty for women of exiting the gang environment was described as another insurmountable problem for both the practitioners and their clients. There is a sense in which the power and control exercised by gang authority was well beyond either the practitioner’s or client’s ability to alter, and there was inevitability about the client’s ongoing involvement with the service.

The adverse impact of meeting other associates from the prison environment and of requiring financial “pay-backs” for favours provided whilst “inside” were mentioned. The ability of women clients to deal with the manipulations and influence of others was questioned in terms of women’s conditioning and the suggestion was made that women clients may be “easily led”.

The negative effect of associating with other known drug users was also referred to as a risk factor. This was connected with the economic pressure of addiction and a decision to return to prostitution in order to be able to access comparatively expensive substances. The return to prostitution in turn affected some clients by reinforcing their addiction to drugs.

The category of alcohol and drug abuse had a similar emphasis to that which had emanated from the descriptive data from the interviews. Clearly, for some clients this issue was long-standing and offending was predicted to continue as long as a dependency remained.

A link was made between early victimisation of clients and later running away from home. This was seen as the first stage of vulnerability to substance abuse, with exposure to drug use on the streets. Once substance dependency had developed this became, for the clients concerned, an ongoing battle with their addiction.

There was concern expressed about the street cost of morphine⁶⁷ and the fact that clients chose cheaper, more potentially harmful, substances such as solvents in order to maintain their addiction. Both immediate and long-term effects of substance abuse were observed. The immediate effects related to the behaviour of women in order to meet their addiction needs and this was reported as commonly involving fraud offences. The longer term effects were the associations formed among drug users and the increased dependency on each others’ offending in order to meet addiction needs. The impact on offending was particularly marked where opiate addiction was involved. Cannabis and alcohol habits were described as having a lesser effect in terms of the extent of offending.

A number of comments were made about the inaccessibility of residential treatment facilities for women in the South Island and the fact that the methadone programme was the only treatment option available for intravenous drug users. The waiting lists for this programme constituted further

⁶⁷ Two informants mentioned the street cost as \$1000-\$2000 per week for an opioid habit at the time.

risk for women in the interim. The problem of lack of child care facilities in residential care was also described as an ongoing problem for clients. There was a degree of frustration expressed about the lack of treatment choices for clients at the time.

Difficulty of access to a variety of other social services was also seen as a contributing factor to both offending and drug use.

If supports aren't there, women become frustrated. Problems with agencies like WINZ [now the Department of Work and Income] in obtaining a birth certificate etc. If there's no support there, their feelings of anger and emotions build up and if there's no intervention certainly things will happen. They might have a ping [intravenous drug use] or take cannabis and alcohol and meet up with old mates and then it's all on.

Clients did try to work with systems and agencies but for a number of reasons systems were seen as failing to meet their needs. This was related by one informant to reluctance by some agencies to deal with probation clients.

Changes within the Probation Service were also perceived as unhelpful in facilitating client access to social services. This was understood as a change in service delivery policy:

What agencies can do is often limited. In many ways they need a social worker on the outside to provide co-ordination and practical help and advocacy. Someone to help walk them through. Before, we had time to go out and work with clients, now with IOMS⁶⁸ this isn't available. We spend time putting stuff in computers rather than working with people. We used to be encouraged to network with agencies and knowing workers in agencies helped to make inroads because of the developed relationship. Now we are discouraged from making these connections. This has often made the difference.

This observation of changes in probation practice bridges both contributor and protector factors. The inference can be made that at a time when probation staff was able to offer more practical forms of assistance this was seen as an effective form of practice. The recent change in emphasis in work

⁶⁸ Integrated Offender Management System which incorporates the new forms of criminogenic risk and needs assessments.

practice had for some informants created a gap in social service co-ordination for released women, which was perceived as a potential risk. The change in probation practice was also related to a shift from an emphasis on casework approaches to sentence management approaches. This was likened to a shift of focus from quality of service to quantity of service with an emphasis on compliance and its measurement.

The affordability of services was seen as an impediment for clients because of the costs of prescriptions. This was related to the overall level of benefits which were seen as insufficient, particularly where the Sickness Benefit was concerned.

There was concern about possible replication of services and lack of co-ordination. This was also linked to the need for a co-ordination role that might assist released women with access and information about social services. This role was raised as a potential solution to the absence of through-care between prison and the community.

An associated issue of access to services was one of eligibility. This particularly related to the area of mental health and the practical effect of the diagnoses assigned to a client. Where other psychiatric and addiction issues were diagnosed as co-morbid, the person was “seen as a substance abuse services problem not a mental health services problem”. This presented community support workers with the problem of trying to obtain psychiatric support for their clients, where clearly mental health issues were impacting on their clients’ behaviour. The example of the impact of depression and suicidality was mentioned in this regard, and the difficulty of accessing appropriate services where substance dependency was also present.

The problem of personality-disordered clients was clearly a concern to practitioners. They cited instances where clients had been diagnosed with multiple personality disorders whilst in prison and how they had been unable to access mental health support on release. It was thought that this group of clients “seem to come before the courts because they don’t fit mental health”. Once again, a degree of resigned inevitability tinged the remarks concerning this particular group of offenders.

The overall incidence of mental health problems was reported as high among released women. Depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorders, and personality disorders were described specifically in regard to practice experience.

This corresponds with the level of mental health issues reported in the Department of Corrections report on psychiatric morbidity in the New Zealand prison population (1999). The incidence of two anxiety disorders, that of obsessive compulsive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder, were found to be significantly higher in the women's prison population than in the population at large. Similarly, the incidence of depression was found to be higher among women prisoners than women in the community (Department of Corrections, 1999). One informant observed that in her experience:

There was a strong relationship between childhood trauma and psychiatric co-morbidity. We can't draw a causative link but there's certainly a strong association.

In some instances post-traumatic stress disorder was related specifically by informants to early childhood experience of sexual abuse.

The effects of sexual abuse and other forms of early victimisation were other factors emphasised in the informant expert accounts. It was acknowledged that there had been heightened awareness of the issue of historical abuse among probation staff and wider community in recent years and that it had not been recognised so much during the 1970s. One informant stated that:

Familial neglect and physical and sexual abuse is so destructive of normal developing and it renders women powerless and they arrive in the adult world completely ill-equipped to make positive life choices because their self-esteem is so debased.

This type of statement contributed to the impression created earlier of an element of inevitability about a client's circumstances. The effects of abuse were specifically connected to substance dependency and the need to "block out the abuse". Abuse was described as a "huge stressor" that brought clients into the "drug scene". It was acknowledged that in many cases "there is an obvious link with offending" but that this factor could not be built into assessments because it would be inappropriate. The informant who expressed this view pointed out that questions on sensitive issues such as sexual abuse would be difficult for probationers to answer at the pre-sentence phase of the sentencing process.

Clients were observed to have heightened anxiety about possible harm to their children, particularly where there was the threat of imprisonment. Concern was expressed about the inter-generational aspects of abuse and the potential access of perpetrators to children once mothers were separated by imprisonment.

The effect of imprisonment itself was one contributing factor highlighted by the interviews with informed experts. The informed experts had in many instances worked with clients prior and post-imprisonment and were, therefore, in a good position to be able to observe its impact.

Speaking from a Maori perspective, one practitioner noted that:

Sometimes we've had women who've been damaged from being inside. If a woman doesn't get help with going to a tangi [funeral] for example this can cause a whole lot of trauma from a cultural perspective.

This concerned the ability of Maori women to maintain significant aspects of Maori custom and practice and the adverse impact of inability to do so. The practitioner described how absence from important cultural occasions such as *tangi* (funerals) sometimes required considerable healing between the inmate and the whanau concerned, after release.

The issue of contamination whilst in prison was raised specifically in regard to the impact on young Maori women. It was observed that Maori women were frequently housed initially in high-security wings in the prison and that this introduced them to more serious and persistent offenders. Where community support workers were trying to discourage the same young women from continuing to mix with more entrenched offenders, their task was made doubly difficult.

Other generic comments referred to the numbers of women wanting to go back to prison, which was perceived as offering a better environment than that offered by the “outside”:

They don't like the bullshit inside but it's better than the isolation outside and not fitting in

On the other hand, the artificiality of the prison environment was described as helping to create an unreal expectation of how things might be on release:

Things can get distorted before getting out and dreams get shattered constantly.

Coping problems were referred to as interfering with adjustment on release and this was linked by one informant to lack of adequate preparation in the weeks before release. This was connected to the inadequacy of social assessments which three informants observed might otherwise have assisted with social-needs identification prior to release. Other coping difficulties were related to the loss of personal belongings during the period of imprisonment, and the considerable effort to re-establish household and personal items. In common with earlier findings, the “Steps to Freedom Grant”, was described as inadequate for re-establishment purposes.

The detrimental effect of separation from family caused by imprisonment was also referred to. The implications for community support workers were that this created problems of family reunification on return to the community. The prison environment was described as obstructive in terms of facilitating visits by family/whanau, particularly where they were from outside of Christchurch.

Other comments related to the number of problems that seemed to arise for prisoners during their sentence, some of which involved community support workers attempting to address specific concerns. The majority of informants referred to a particular management regime as creating particular problems:

There were many grievances under the previous manager where the ombudsman had to be called in. So much for speaking out on behalf of women.” [Reference to the high public profile of a previous manager at Christchurch Women’s Prison]

One woman became obsessed with the impact of continual obstructions [by the same manager] and it impacted on her quality of life afterwards. The little things she did were small in comparison with others who had done far worse but who were released.

The effect of stigmatisation was commented on in relation to adjustment on release and how this impacted on social relationships. Women had described problems in dealing with agencies that knew them before they went to prison in terms of rent, obtaining work and credit. A high level of social anxiety was observed, and how this created difficulties for women in approaching agencies

for assistance. The loss of personal belongings and household effects left women in the position of approaching charities for support. The practitioners had noticed that the shame attached to seeking help had adversely impacted on released women. The consequent reluctance to seek help meant that they were “going to the wire before getting help”.

In line with the commentary on the effect of imprisonment provided elsewhere by the participants themselves, the expert informants indicated that imprisonment impacted on their clients. Whether there was an impact on re-offending is difficult to discern. Clearly, there was an impact on the types of problems that community support workers had to address on behalf of their clients. A number of informants expressed views about how women inmates could be better prepared for release and this leads into the area of desistance and the factors they associated with helping clients to stop offending.

9.8 Informed experts comments on factors associated with protection from re-offending

The factors that informed experts associated with protection from offending are listed in Table 9.2 in descending order of their frequency of occurrence in the accounts.

Table 9.2: Informed Experts: Protectors from Re-offending

Protectors from Re-offending	
Social service supports	15
Rate of personal change	14
Significant others	11
Methadone treatment	5
Imprisonment effect	4
Pre-release measures	4
Motivation	3
Employment	2
Resilience	2
Children	1
Age	1
Hierarchy of needs ⁶⁹	1

The most commonly reported factor associated with stopping offending was the category of social service supports. A variety of agencies were referred to specifically as providing necessary

⁶⁹ This denoted a planned approach to meeting released inmates’ needs according to a hierarchy of needs.

assistance to released inmates. Practical assistance through food banks and church agencies was cited as helpful, as were advocacy and generic support. One informant described this as requiring “often just good warm people who have the time to sit and listen and be supportive”.

The importance of the quality of supportive relationships with agency personnel was raised and this meant for one informant that:

I think women getting out of prison need a high level of personal support when they get out a bit like a buddy...like with the Family Help Trust.

Another informant observed that:

hanging in there with women is important and not being judgemental – still being there to pick up the pieces and not giving up on people and being honest and consistent.

Her observation was that this had led to more effective relationships with clients.

Others referred to the empowerment of clients through practical advocacy, advising how to speak to agency staff about appropriate attire, matters that “could lead to better self-esteem”. This view was expressed in relation to probation work, particularly that the emphasis of the work had changed from social casework (a broad generic approach) to targeted work (a more narrowly focussed approach). The informant stated that the casework approach was still necessary in order to build trust with a client and that this in turn helped working in a targeted way.

The category of “significant others” is associated with social services in that frequently significant others were social service personnel. Good relationships between methadone workers and their clients had been observed to impact on offending behaviour. The guidance of a “friendly, positive person who doesn’t have a statutory orientation” was also suggested as effective.

Relationship stability was described as important and the role of stable family relationships was thought to be significant for some women. One informant noted that a number of clients she knew of who were doing well in the community, were currently in stable lesbian relationships that had formed in prison, and that these had seemed to have a positive influence on the women concerned.

Having good role models was thought to be important. In some instances where women had decided to make changes in their lives it was due to:

...meeting an officer or a visitor who has helped a person to see what they are doing. Sometimes people don't even recognise their significance. Sometimes all they need is that window of knowledge or connection to be underway.

The assistance of ex-inmates who had been released for some time and successfully re-adjusted had been noted as very helpful to newly-released women.

The rate of personal change was also described as significant in the process of addressing re-offending. The majority of comments reflected the view that stopping offending was not a sudden process but one which was fraught with “ups and downs”. This process was described by one informant as:

Going straight happens over a period of time, even for those doing OK some relapse and they go back to pinging but don't fall down all the way. They might still keep themselves out of trouble.

This indicates that the process of change is not “all or nothing”, but rather, it is one in which some changes may be made in some areas but others take longer to address. The wider perception that “people who have been wheeling and dealing and stealing” will stop suddenly was seen as unrealistic. There was a broad acceptance that “some people continually offend and it takes time working with them.” This can be related to the earlier reference concerning the qualities required of a helping relationship in terms of re-offending, and the need to “hang in there” through the “ups and downs” of personal change.

Informants associated the rate of personal change with level of motivation. This was related not only to needing to want to change, but also to having the opportunity to make changes.

In the general reflections of the expert informants, a level of admiration was evident from comments about released women as clients. There was acknowledgement of the difficulties their clients faced in coping with their individual circumstances:

I have an overriding sense of the courage of women offenders which is often linked to an acute awareness of their own shortcomings. I've been surprised at their courage – some of them have been to hell and back.

This was accompanied by the repeated concern in probation practice that there was now “little time left for advocacy in that very vulnerable window period shortly after release from prison”. This was supplemented by the view that, in relation to women clients, probation practice no longer recognised the “real pay-offs from empowering individuals”, and that more time and energy were required in the immediate post-release period.

There were mixed reflections about the role of culture in offending, particularly Maori culture. Cultural groups and networks were reported as helpful for some women in terms of practical support. However, the impact of dysfunction in *whanau* (family) of origin was described as sometimes not only affecting relationships within the *whanau*, but also affecting relationships in terms of cultural identity. Where clients had experienced a mix of cultures in their backgrounds, this was perceived as causing difficulty in terms of “the person may only know one side and be searching for the other”. In one instance this had involved bringing two cultural sides of the family together for the birth of the client’s child, and this was seen to have had a positive effect on the mother’s progress. Aside from the issue of offending, it was recognised that “there is a basic need to know who you are, where you come from and who one’s family is” and this need was seen to extend across cultures.

Questions on gender and how this affected social service practice with released women, elicited a range of responses. The notion of gender was raised particularly in relation to the quality of clients’ lives and the quality of offending. The issue of lack of choice, which arose in the section of data pertaining to relationships, was also raised in terms of gender and how for women offending was often not a matter of choice. The following comment illustrates this view:

...they re-offend to please a partner and to maintain a lifestyle level and the partner will not accept anything less. A woman will re-offend to please him and is fearful of the consequences.

The lesser role of women in terms of offending, reflected by the official statistics, meant that the practitioners had found it unusual for women to be the “major player” in terms of offending. The more common reality they had observed was of women being used by either individuals or gangs in networks of offending and drug dealing. It was noted that women clients seemed to “set real limits” to the type of offending they may commit and that this was related to their ability to “still respect people”. However, it was also observed that the incidence of violence perpetrated by women was changing and that “violence becomes a normal response in particular settings”.

In summary, the information from the informed experts in regard to both *contributors* to re-offending and what *protectors* from offending were more heavily weighted in particular areas. Apart from some individual perspectives, the degree of shared emphasis by the group as a whole occurred despite the diverse roles that the practitioners held in their respective organisations. There was a degree of commonality in terms of the emphases when compared with earlier findings.

In regard to contributors to re-offending, economic issues were seen as important. However, once comments about the role of social services, relationships with offenders, and criminal associates were combined under one “social” heading, the importance of the social domain became more apparent. Only somewhat less frequently mentioned were the impact of drug and alcohol abuse, the lack of deterrence of imprisonment, and the impact of mental health issues.

Overall, the most commonly reported factors that were associated with stopping offending also belonged in the “social” domain. These encompassed the roles of social services and personal social support, as well as the impact of significant people. This reflected the emphasis that emerged in the data from the participants, who also indicated that social supports were significant protectors from offending. The additional factors that had not been emphasised as heavily elsewhere were the importance of personal readiness for change and the interpersonal variation in the rate of personal change. There was also a lack of emphasis on substance abuse treatment as a protector from offending, although this may well have been influenced by the reported lack of treatment facilities available to women in the Christchurch area at the time. However, the methadone programme was described as a factor that reduced re-offending in some cases.

9.9 Final feedback from the participants

As foreshadowed in the research design (p.149) the participants were offered the opportunity to provide final feedback on the findings of the study. Three participants chose to meet with me for this purpose. While this is a small sub-group to provide feedback from the original cohort nevertheless their comments were interesting and valid.

Overall there was affirmation from this group that the findings reflected their experience of offending. However, there were some areas that they wished to emphasise and these related primarily to immediate release conditions.

It was seen as important to emphasise the value of having employment because it meant “something to get up for each day”. This statement was expanded to include other types of activity that might offer a similar motivation such as training programmes.

Financial problems were referred to again as causing difficulty in the immediate post-release period. The Steps to Freedom grant was seen as inadequate for both rent or board situations. The extra demands of “meeting the needs of the kids” were reinforced particularly where clothing and food was concerned. The participants also said that they found it difficult to cope with debt and suggested they needed “time to get on your feet before paying it back” in the immediate post-release period.

The fact that there was only one halfway house for single women was perceived as a disadvantage. It was suggested that there needed to be more places offering wider choices for women in accordance with their particular needs, in particular, a facility where released women could have their children with them whilst on parole.

The long wait to resume methadone treatment was referred to as the key determinant of re-offending by one participant. She thought that released inmates need priority on the methadone programme in consideration of all the other reintegration stresses they were likely to experience.

Chapter Ten

Integrated Data Summary

In order to summarise the array of data elicited by the different sources of inquiry and by the different methods employed, I began by further clustering the major factors under broad domains. Each set of data was clustered in this manner and the domains thus created were compared across data sets to see whether shared patterns of broad collections of categories and factors within categories were discernible, or whether unique domains existed in each data set.

Individual items under each clustered domain were detailed in order to avoid losing the relative significance of these individual items. The items had already been extrapolated from the categories and, therefore, further aggregation would risk losing the meaning within each cluster.

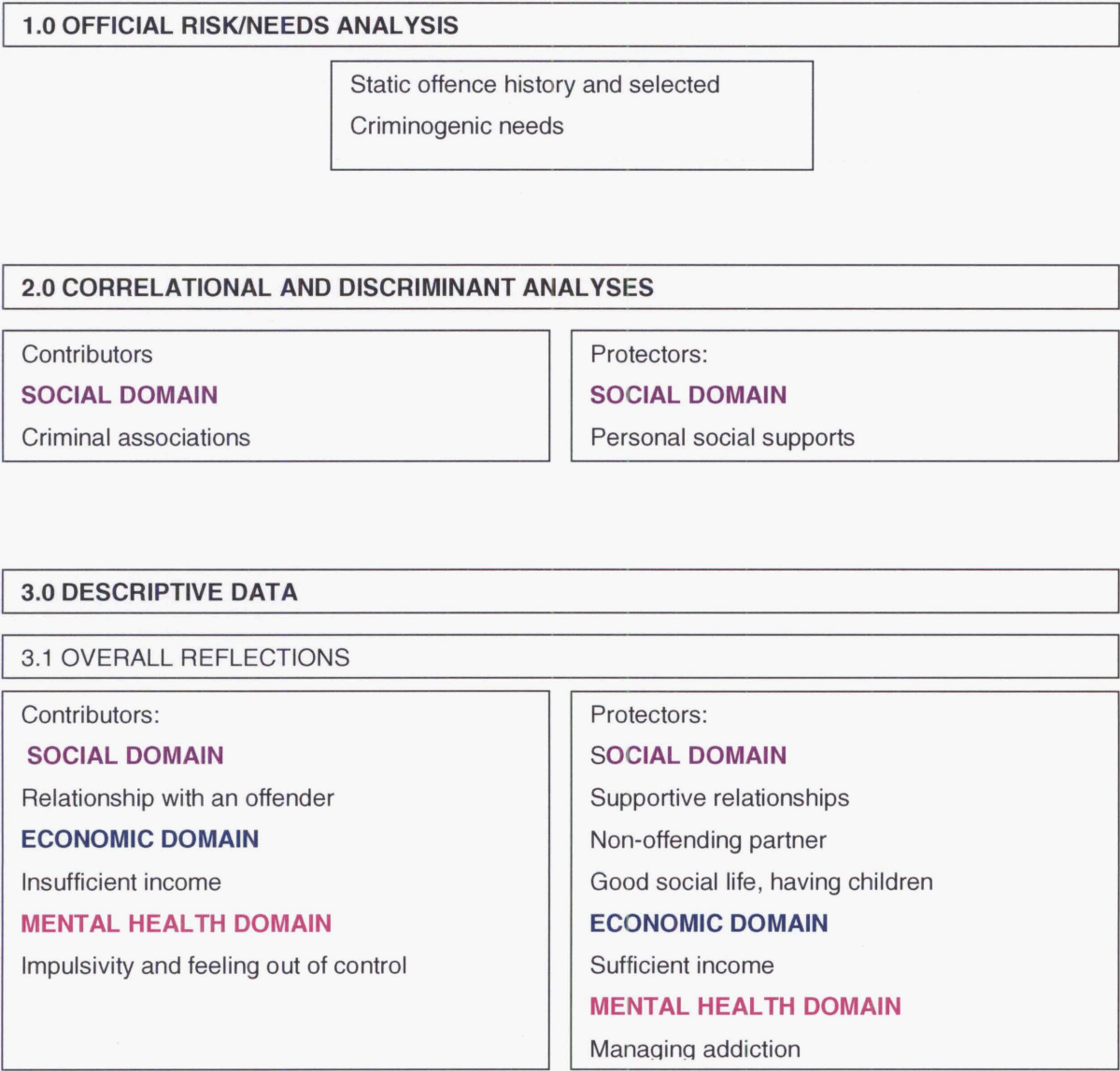
The data had already begun to emerge in interconnecting layers. The first layer that emerged applied to the group of women offenders as a whole, and this included demographic features and the majority of the major categories. Within this larger group there were sub-groups of women with specific issues such as substance dependency and dependent children, for example.

The second layer consisted of those factors found to be associated with re-offending for this group of re-offenders. The first layer applied to the group of participants as whole and therefore can be said to be shared by women offenders as a group. It is possible that these underlying factors acted differentially on the group of re-offenders and this may relate to relative resiliency and differing ability to cope with adversity. However, it may also mean that the group of re-offenders experienced qualitatively more severe forms of social deprivation overall. It was not possible within the scope of this study to determine how these factors interceded.

Once the process of clustering the domains was completed, a flow chart was developed to show which domains originated from which data set. The chart illustrates the interconnections that emerged from each data set.

A further process of analysis separated the first underlying layer of themes common to the whole group as opposed to those associated with re-offending. The following chart uses differential type settings in order to illustrate commonalities and differences within each data set.

Figure 10.1: Meta Factorial-Analysis



3.2 AGE RELATED FACTORS

<p>Protectors</p> <p>0-12 Years</p> <p>SOCIAL DOMAIN</p> <p>Constant social support, good role models, supportive family</p> <p>12-18 Years</p> <p>SOCIAL DOMAIN</p> <p>Good role models, supportive family</p> <p>MENTAL HEALTH DOMAIN</p> <p>Substance abuse treatment</p> <p>18-25 Years</p> <p>SOCIAL DOMAIN</p> <p>Personal social support, having children, social service support</p> <p>25-40 Years</p> <p>SOCIAL DOMAIN</p> <p>Having children, personal social support, getting too old for it</p> <p>MENTAL HEALTH DOMAIN</p>	<p>Contributors</p> <p>0-12 Years</p> <p>VICTIMISATION DOMAIN</p> <p>Sexual abuse</p> <p>SOCIAL DOMAIN</p> <p>Running away, truanting, loss of family support</p> <p>MENTAL HEALTH DOMAIN</p> <p>Substance abuse</p> <p>12-18 Years</p> <p>SOCIAL DOMAIN</p> <p>Criminal associates, running away, relationships with offenders, loss of significant others</p> <p>VICTIMISATION DOMAIN</p> <p>Sexual abuse</p> <p>18-25 Years</p> <p>SOCIAL DOMAIN</p> <p>Relationship with offenders, criminal associates, loss of significant others</p>
--	--

4.0 FACTORS IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO LAST OFFENCE

<p>Contributors</p> <p>MENTAL HEALTH DOMAIN</p> <p>Out of control, spur of the moment, substance dependence</p> <p>ECONOMIC DOMAIN</p> <p>Meeting money debts</p>

5.0 QUALITATIVE LIFE HISTORY

Contributors

SOCIAL DOMAIN

Familial background, running away, criminal associates, relationships with offenders, dependent children

VICTIMISATION DOMAIN

Through the life course

MENTAL HEALTH DOMAIN

Offending itself – behavioural

Protectors

SOCIAL DOMAIN

Role of significant others, therapeutic relationships, having children

MENTAL HEALTH DOMAIN

Substance abuse treatment, motivation, readiness for change

6.0 PROBATION FILES

Contributors

SOCIAL DOMAIN

Family background, recent relationships, dependent children

VICTIMISATION DOMAIN

Sexual, physical and psychological abuse

MENTAL HEALTH DOMAIN

Substance abuse and psychiatric diagnoses

ECONOMIC DOMAIN

Insufficiency

7.0 INFORMED EXPERTS

Contributors

SOCIAL DOMAIN

Relationships with offenders, lack of social services, criminal associates and gang involvement, stigma

ECONOMIC DOMAIN

Poverty and insufficient income

MENTAL HEALTH DOMAIN

Substance abuse and psychiatric issues

VICTIMISATION DOMAIN

Across the life course

Protectors

SOCIAL DOMAIN

Social service supports, significant others

MENTAL HEALTH DOMAIN

Rate of personal change

Once the categories are clustered in this way, patterns of results emerge that intersect the data boundaries. In line with Huberman & Miles’(1994) interactive model of data analysis each data set, which usually but not always represented a different method of data collection, was analysed.⁷⁰ This

⁷⁰ The method of analysis is described more fully in Part 3, pp234-236.

model allows for the discernment of interactions between elements across data collection methods and data sets.

The diagram illustrates that there are distinguishing features within data sets, some of which may be attributable to the type of questions asked. For example, those questions that were retrospective over the life course appeared to have resulted in a stronger emphasis on external factors. A different emphasis emerged from the questions relating to factors impacting immediately prior to an offence being committed, towards internal behavioural factors.

There were similarities between the data sets in regard to the domains, for example the social domain emerged from each data set except from the "Factors immediately prior to last offence" set. The social domain in each data set was made up of different configurations of sub-items. Each sub-item such as "criminal associates" or "relationships with offenders" was connected by the domain concerned, in this case the social domain. Each domain with its respective sub-items that had emerged from the different methods of inquiry employed (data sets) was then considered and analysed, beginning with the historical offence factors of the official risk/needs measures.

10.1 Risk/ and Criminogenic Needs analysis

Whilst this study was not primarily concerned with prediction, and indeed the number of participants would preclude the research outcomes from being employed in this way, it has explored the application of some predictive measures with women. Those measures were applied by the Department of Corrections, Community Probation service at the time of the interviews in 1999. The measures were based on the LSI (refer Part Two).

The total risk and criminogenic needs scores for the group of self-reported re-offenders was higher than those of the self-reported non-reoffenders, which may superficially suggest a degree of utility for the measures with female offenders. However, a significant number of the non-offender group still scored highly on the risk/needs scales and yet had resided successfully in the community for years and this was confirmed by official Community Probation records.

Among the group of re-offenders, there was also a higher level of self-reported re-offending than that which was known to the authorities. This was reflected in the lack of knowledge in the

Probation records and lack of apprehension and processing for the offending that was disclosed. In contrast to their categorisation with the instrument, six of this group reported themselves as currently at low risk of re-offending based on their recent access to the methadone programme.

The overall higher needs score of the re-offender group, disguises the low needs score of ten women within this group. The low level of need was positively associated with re-offending in these cases, which may suggest two possibilities. Either the needs do not necessarily relate to female offenders and there may be others that are more applicable, or that criminogenic needs play less of a role in the prediction of re-offending of women.

The findings from the application of the risk/needs instrument tend to support Bonta et al.'s (1995) contention that the application of risk scales to female offenders has doubtful validity. Their study found only two predictors applied to female offenders and these were age at first adult conviction and sentence length. In common with Miller et al., (1995) the current study suggests the likelihood that a range of other characteristics and factors may be more significant in terms of female re-offending. These factors were related primarily to the social domain and the quality of relationships with peers and in family and support networks. Secondary factors were associated with substance abuse and economic stress.

Once the information from the combined data is considered alongside the risk/needs analysis, re-offending as a phenomenon becomes more complicated than the crude historical measures might indicate. For example, changes in offending patterns in response to the methadone programme which were reported by some participants and informed experts, suggest that significant reductions in offending may occur despite the fact that relatively minor offending such as cannabis use continues. In other words, the degree of risk of re-offending may alter significantly but this will not necessarily be reflected in official measures.

Addressing re-offending as a dynamic process that continues throughout the life course is another element that is not reflected in the actuarial measures. The participants described this process as one of "ups and downs" where a range of situational and social factors may impact on offending decisions.

10.2 The Social Domain

Overall the most significant pattern to emerge from the data is that of the role of the social domain. It features in each data set with the exception of factors immediately prior to an offence. It was predominant in terms of the discriminant analysis and reinforced in a variety of ways in the remaining data. This finding fits with the 1995 review of prediction studies conducted by Simond & Andrews (cited in Gendreau, 1996) which found that women were more likely to be affected by factors of a “situational and social interactive nature” (Gendreau, 1996, p.67).

In terms of how the social domain contributes to re-offending, a number of selected categories were clearly more significant than others. The data began with the correlational and discriminant analyses and the finding that “stopping someone from offending” related more strongly to the re-offenders’ group. I had anticipated that this question would indicate a degree of personal change on behalf of the participant (as a possible protector from offending). Instead it indicated a higher risk, probably associated with mixing with other active offenders.

A number of the later findings under the social domain within which this factor lies reinforced the notion of risk of criminal associates. However, the quality of such relationships appears to alter across the life course in accordance with different social patterns. The participants themselves, in reflecting on re-offending in a broad generic sense, were of the view that having a relationship with an offender was a strong contributing factor. This type of association would occur at a time when women began to enter intimate relationships with others. Many intimate relationships were characterised by abuse of power and control. The data suggest that the model of criminal offending developed by Sampson & Laub, in terms of the role of significant life transitions and events during the life course, is applicable to female offenders (Sampson & Laub, 1995).

The age-related data further reinforced the different nature of associations in different age periods. During adolescence, the strongest contributor reported by the participants as a whole was having criminal associates. This was linked in a developmental process to *running away from home* and the *loss of significant others*. Forming associations with other offenders was described as a natural consequence of living on the streets and gaining the survival skills required in this context.

From the age of 18-25 years, having criminal associations, including involvement with gangs, was the second most important contributing factor perceived by the participants. From the ages of 18-40 years, the participants described their intimate relationships with other offenders as most significant in contributing to their ongoing offending.

In terms of the participants' life histories, the entry into offending and continuing to re-offend were described in a developmental process. A significant element of this process related to relationships with other offenders either as criminal associates or in intimate relationships or both. Initial and ongoing involvement with gang associates was a part of this process for some women.

The social domain also featured in the Probation files, where accounts of early friendships with other offenders in adolescence were described, as were intimate relationships with offenders. Having dependent children was also narrated as having an at times positive, and at times, negative impact on re-offending. It had a positive impact when women recognised the effects of their offending on their children and a negative impact when women chose to offend in order to meet the financial needs of their children.

The informed experts stressed a developmental process across the life course in terms of ongoing criminal involvement. They described their observations of the impact of successive relationships with other offenders in a way that indicated a degree of inevitability about female offending. Criminal associates and gang involvement also featured in their accounts and in relation to the latter, the difficulty for women of extracting themselves from gang networks. Lack of social services was also connected to re-offending - for example through lack of practical support for women after release leading to financial stress.

The other major finding from the correlational and discriminant analyses that distinguished the non re-offenders' group in terms of protection from offending was having "personal social support". Personal social support also fits within the social domain, but it raises the question of what kind of social support the participants were referring to, for example, whether this was from family, friends or social service agency personnel. Social support was explored more fully by the additional methods of inquiry.

In the overall reflections on offending the participants described supportive relationships as the key to stopping offending. This was followed by having a non-offending partner and a good social life. Having children was additionally seen as a protective factor.

In the age-related data on childhood years, the women viewed constant social support, having good role models and having supportive family as necessary for protection from offending. This was followed in adolescence by having good role models and personal social support. Personal social support was described as “having someone through the good times and the bad”. From 18-25 years, personal social support featured along with having children and having social service support. There were few responses for the latter age period but *personal social support* and *having children* also featured in this age group.

The life history data indicated that *personal social support* was related to the role of significant others who were seen as supportive throughout the fluctuations of life changes. *Significant others* represented people from a range of roles and occupations from partners and families to agency workers and prison officers. Therapeutic relationships with counsellors, psychologists and social workers were described as life changing. Relationships with Probation officers, particularly those who were perceived to be non-judgemental and empathetic, also featured.

The importance placed on the role of significant others was reinforced in the data from the informed experts who described the difference that friendly concern from social service personnel and members of the wider community could make in terms of social integration. Social service supports were seen as key to ensuring the stability and viability of life outside prison. Both social factors were related to the rate of personal change and the recognition that addressing re-offending was a developmental process. The importance of social services and the quality of relationships with agency personnel is also reflected in the two American studies that have focussed on this area of women’s re-offending (O’Brien, 2001a; Pearl, 1996).

There were other key factors that were associated with re-offending that emerged from the descriptive and qualitative data. They did not emerge as strongly from the correlational analysis. However, the major difference between the statistical method and the descriptive and qualitative data was the retrospective emphasis of much of the latter two methods. In other words, it was likely that where a participant reported as non-offending at the time of the interview, her reflections would

have related to sometimes extensive periods of her life when she was actively offending. Likewise, the comments of the informed experts represented experience based on sometimes lengthy periods of service.

The retrospective data culminate in a perspective of re-offending that combines the views of offenders themselves as “experts” in their own offending together with the views of practitioners, many of whom had worked with the same group of women over many years. In this respect, the retrospective data complements the statistical analysis and adds domains and factors that were perceived as significant by the majority of the participants overall.

10.3 The Economic Domain

The demographic data described a group that was severely materially and socially disadvantaged, and this matches other studies about women offenders both internationally (Chesney-Lind, 1989, 1993; Jurik, 1983; Corbett & Petersilia, 1994) and in New Zealand (Lashlie & Pivac, 2000; Moth & Hudson, 1999). Economic hardship and reliance on prostitution and illegal sources of income were commonly described. The effect of poverty in childhood and throughout the life course had impacted in various ways in terms of offending, from entry into early thieving as a means to obtain goods, to economic needs associated with parenting later in life. The individual budgets of the participants indicated a significant gap between expenditure and income, particularly for mothers and children living on state benefits. Participants described ongoing offending in order to better meet the needs of their children, while the majority described economic factors impacting on decision-making immediately prior to an offence being committed. The economic domain was the most commonly associated with re-offending after the range of social factors described above.

In terms of overall reflection from the women, *having insufficient income* was viewed as a key factor in re-offending. Participants who were parents associated this contributor particularly with trying to meet the material needs of their children. Conversely, having sufficient income was viewed as a protective factor followed closely by a number of social factors. The majority of participants held this view and it is therefore likely that, where participants had been residing in the community successfully for some years, economic issues had affected them at some stage during the process of addressing their re-offending. The descriptive data pertaining to social service support indicated that

the majority of participants found that the re-establishment grant available through the Department of Work and Income was insufficient for the period immediately after release.

In the age-related data the women referred to *not having enough money* as contributing to their entry into offending as a child, and to *being financially better off* as protecting them from offending in the later age groupings. In the previous descriptive demographic data relating to financial status, a number of participants had referred to the decision to re-enter prostitution as a solution to their economic situations. Other participants described their use of social services and food banks as a means to supplement their income. In other words, economic strain may result in a number of choices for released women, not all of which will necessarily involve offending.

The life histories rarely referred to economic issues as explanatory in terms of offending. The focus of these accounts was primarily around significant life events, such as victimisation and the loss of relationships and support networks, and a shift towards criminal lifestyles through new relationships.

The informed experts accorded the economic domain a degree of emphasis similar to that of the participants in the descriptive data. It was considered important after different relational factors within the social domain, as a key element associated with re-offending. Economic factors were particularly associated with mothers trying to meet the needs of their children, and with overall insufficiency at different stages after release. Economic stress immediately after release from prison was emphasised as a high-risk period.

The data concerning the role of economic factors share some similarity with Jurik's study despite the distance in time and context (1983). Jurik also found "...serious economic pressures-particularly in the days after release" (1983, p.610) and concluded that women were particularly vulnerable to financial pressure through lack of employment opportunity and continued dependence on others for income maintenance.

10.4 Mental Health Domain

Issues related to mental health areas occurred frequently in the descriptive and qualitative data. As with the Moth & Hudson study conducted with 35 New Zealand female offenders, "drug problems,

and alcohol problems that tentatively met criteria for an axis one psychiatric condition were relatively common in the women” (1999, p.45). This category included substance abuse and psychiatric issues.

The results of the chi-square analysis of the relationship between substance abuse and the group of re-offenders found a high correlation between incidence of different forms of substance abuse and re-offending (refer Part 4, section 8.6.5). There was a significant number of non-offenders who also abused a variety of substances (5, $n^1=13$). There was a higher number of non drug users in the non-offenders group (8, $n^2=13$).

In the overall reflections from the participants the notions of *feeling out of control* and *impulsivity* were associated with re-offending. *Impulsivity* also featured strongly in the factors immediately prior to an offence being committed. Occasionally the effects of specific substances were also associated with factors impacting immediately prior to an offence.

Offending in order to service a substance dependency was particularly noticeable in regard to intravenous drug users while they were not on the methadone programme. In terms of protection from offending, managing one’s addiction was cited as significant.

Substance abuse featured strongly in the age-related data where at different stages in the participants’ lives it appeared in different forms. In childhood, participants were introduced to substance abuse and this developed into a dependency issue in the 18-25 year age grouping. Receiving substance abuse treatment during adolescence was described as a protective factor, as it was in the 25-40 year age period.

The life histories described treatment for substance abuse as a significant turning point in terms of re-offending, for some participants. This particularly applied to those on the methadone programme.

In the Probation files both substance abuse and psychiatric issues were raised in relation to re-offending. Access to the methadone programme was also described as having reduced offending for some participants.

The informed experts commented on substance abuse as a contributing factor and related the lack of residential treatment facilities at the time as impacting on released women. Psychiatric issues were raised in terms of access and availability of treatment in the community as opposed to prison. A difficulty for those women diagnosed with co-morbid substance abuse and mental health issues was described in relation to accessing treatment systems. Women with personality disorders and co-morbid psychiatric conditions were seen to have additional problems with treatment access. Lack of access to methadone treatment was cited as a problem for some released women. Obtaining treatment for a range of mental health issues and for substance abuse issues was seen as a protective factor.

10.5 Victimisation

A high incidence of victimisation during early childhood was experienced by the participants in this study. Further victimisation occurred during adolescence with intimate partners and as a consequence of gang involvement. In adulthood, it was a feature of many of the intimate relationships formed over different periods of time. For some women it was repeated in institutional settings, and this was accompanied by little confidence in the ability of prison systems to address violent behaviour. The data concerning victimisation in early childhood and in intimate relationships reflect levels recorded both in the US and in New Zealand, where the incidence of victimisation reported among women's prison populations has been high (In the US, Chesney-Lind, 1989, 1993; Widom, 1994; in New Zealand, Lashlie & Pivac, 2000; Moth & Hudson, 1999; Taylor, 1996). The contribution this study has made to the possible role of victimisation is to begin to appreciate the accumulated effect of re-victimisation over the life course and the potential dehumanising effect of repeated experiences.

In age-related data, the role of victimisation emerged particularly as precipitating a series of related events that led to entry into offending. Running away and forming relationships with older offenders on the streets was a typical consequence of early victimisation. Its impact was described as continuing in adolescence through re-victimisation in initial intimate relationships. The descriptions of the various types of violence indicated both the traumatic nature of early events and also the normalisation of much of this experience after further re-victimisation. Both victimisation and re-victimisation were significant in life history accounts as impacting on adult relationships. In addition, some participants experienced violent acts during their periods of imprisonment.

The Probation records also noted the negative impact of victimisation where it had been disclosed to staff, in terms of its influence on subsequent relationships and on self-worth. It re-emerged strongly from the reflections of the informed experts who regarded this area as impacting on the quality of clients' relationships with intimate partners.

The availability of therapeutic counselling in order to address the harmful effects of sexual abuse was valued by those participants who made use of this service. In these cases this had extended beyond the prison environment and appeared to assist women in their personal growth. Participants connected this therapy with personal change and assisting them in addressing their offending.

In addition to the domains that were seen to be associated with re-offending by both the participants and the informed experts in this study, a number of meta-themes emerged that crossed the boundaries of the categories. These themes appeared at different stages of the data analysis process and re-occurred to the extent that they became features of the life experience of this group of women.

10.6 Significant Interconnecting Themes

10.6.1 Violence

The life histories of the participants and the age-related events associated with offending offered evidence of lives that were marked by periods of often extreme domestic violence. For many of the participants, violence began in their families of origin and extended to the first relationships they encountered in adolescence. In adulthood, domestic violence in a range of forms impacted on their lives. Experience of violence within the prison institutional context further affected some women.

The participants did not present themselves as victims in relation to such experiences, but rather as survivors. In many instances, the degree of violence was normalised within the different settings from which it originated; for example, whether this setting was the family home, the streets they learnt to live in, or in gang related settings. A significant number of the women bore physical scars that were mute testimony to the acts of violence they had experienced; in some cases these had been inflicted in early childhood. The majority had experienced repeated acts of physical and sexual violence towards them at various stages in their lives.

10.6.2 Poverty

The experience of poverty appeared at various life stages in the majority of the participants' accounts. It began with descriptions of early family life characterised by lack of basic necessities and thieving in order to obtain goods that other children were seen to have. It continued with the loss of economic support once they were estranged from family support networks and living on the streets. This was followed by the need to provide for their children and the economic difficulties they faced as parents. The failure of income support systems in the period between leaving the family home and reaching the eligible age for independent state benefits, contributed to economic hardships at this time. A different type of failure of basic income support was sometimes experienced in the period immediately after release from prison where the additional costs of re-establishment increased the potential for economic hardship.

The household budgets of the majority of the participants indicated a significant gap between income and expenditure, particularly where mothers and children were concerned. This created a dependency on social services to supplement income through food banks and practical aid. The stigma attached to seeking such basic assistance through other organisations was felt strongly by some participants, whereas others spoke with considerable pride of their financial management skills and ability to access support.

The majority of the participants had minimal assets, were in debt most of the time and struggling to meet their credit obligations through a variety of means. On the whole they resided in the cheapest forms of rental accommodation they could find and this was mainly in the poorer suburbs of Christchurch. The experience of serious economic hardship was characterised in many instances by reliance on prostitution and illegal sources of income.

10.6.3 Lack of Choice

Associated with the experience of poverty and victimisation was the overall lack of choice available to this group of women. There was an overriding sense of inevitability that pervaded their narrative accounts. A similar inevitability was described by the practitioners who worked with them in the community and who also described frustration with influences on their clients that were seen to be beyond their and their clients' control. The early family histories of the majority of women began

with experience of a range of forms of victimisation. Their response to victimisation invariably involved separation from families of origin at the age of 12-14 when they ran away from home. This was followed by sexual assaults during adolescence and the influence of power and control exerted by their first partners. A number of women pointed out that it was not until their first incarceration that they discovered that abuse is socially unacceptable, and prison offered them the means to begin to recover from abuse through therapeutic counselling and the support of some empathetic prison staff.

The experience of victimisation was in some cases directly related to substance abuse, due to efforts to escape from psychological pain by the use of various substances. Clearly, experience of sexual abuse marked many of the participants' lives to the extent that they had received ongoing therapy for many years. For significant periods of their lives they had learned to live with abuse and considered this to be preferable to loneliness and isolation.

The experience of stigma both in relation to imprisonment and poverty impacted on their lives in a variety of ways. Their ability to access employment and education was affected not only by their view of their purpose in life, but also by the practical obstacles to attaining these goals. Very few participants regarded employment or education as realistic goals, preferring instead the traditional feminine goals of parenting and nurturing. In the few cases where participants had succeeded in obtaining employment, this had significantly assisted them both materially and through further education and training. This study suggests that, whilst employment and education are worthy goals for released women, these goals appear unattainable in the context of their lives. In other words, the participants' life choices in regard to employment and careers were limited by such influences as poverty, child care obligations, and meeting addiction needs.

Other environmental factors that were seen to impact on the ability of released women to address their offending related to the provision of treatment services in the alcohol and drug addiction field. The waiting list for the methadone programme was specifically cited as a barrier, as was the policy in regard to discontinued availability of methadone in the prison environment. Health policy at the time dictated that women sentenced to imprisonment no longer had access to methadone treatment and were relegated to the bottom of waiting lists on their release. This was specifically referred to by some women as setting them up to fail on release as a consequence of their continued dependence and reliance on illegal substances.

10.6.4 *Addressing Re-offending as a Developmental Process*

Much of the retrospective data in relation to re-offending suggested that the process of addressing personal change was a developmental one. The comments from both participants and informed experts in regard to the ongoing fluctuations in the participants' lives, helped to explain the occurrence of relapse in attempting to address substance dependency and re-offending. The desire for social service personnel to "hang in there" for them through fluctuating periods of personal change suggests the need for acceptance of the variety of factors that impact on women offenders' lives. This was acknowledged by the informed experts who observed the value of consistent, non-judgemental and friendly support in regard to this process.

The experience immediately after release from prison elicited information from the participants about the need to recognise an adjustment period after institutionalisation. This period was described by both groups as critical in terms of practical income support needs and in terms of psychological adjustment. A number of suggestions were made about how this transition may be managed better, including the possibility of an "aggressive social outreach"⁷¹ role for social services at this time. Another suggestion from some of the Probation staff interviewed was the notion of assisting social integration with a 'strengthening families'⁷² style of meeting, where the significant family, individuals and support people who have the potential to be involved with an inmate after release, meet in an informal setting to plan for immediate release needs.

10.6.5 *The Role of Gender*

The role of gender emerged from the data in a variety of ways; from the attitudes expressed by the participants and informed experts towards the societal role of women in a broad sense, to the specific impact of gender in relationships. In regard to the former, the majority of participants held what may be regarded as traditional views about their purpose in life concerning their role as parents and nurturers. In regard to the latter, the informed experts held expectations about the relative power

⁷¹ "Aggressive outreach" was described as a generic social work service providing advice, referral and support to released inmates.

⁷² Strengthening Families is a programme introduced by New Zealand's Child Youth and Family Services during the 1990s aimed at family unification and reinforcement.

and status of their clients as women and mothers in terms of their intimate relationships. These expectations may be related to the changed notion of the role of women since the impact of feminism during the 1970s. It is questionable whether this particular group of mainly working-class women participants could be said to have achieved the degree of equality that social service personnel and their more middle-class sisters desired for them.

The specific experience of the participants described situations of domestic violence which impacted on their ongoing offending. The observations of informed experts confirmed this as a common experience, and these experts expressed an accompanying sense of frustration at the domestic circumstances many of their clients faced. Indeed, they spoke with considerable admiration of the will to survive demonstrated by their female clients.

The experience of the participants suggests that explanations for criminal offending need to include consideration of the variety of ways that gender impacts on criminal lifestyles. It also suggests that in addressing re-offending, understanding the issues that frequently impact on the lives of women offenders is a necessary requirement for working with them. The contribution of feminist theorists to the understanding of women's crime has been to draw attention to the need for gender to be central to an examination and appreciation of this phenomenon (in particular Chesney-Lind, Naffine, Morris, Carlen). This study has further explored how gender mediates a range of factors previously understood to influence women's re-offending, and highlights those that are unique to women offenders such as their relative role in relationships.

10.6.6 Cultural Matters

Maori cultural factors were important to both the participants and the informed experts throughout the different stages of the study. This domain was treated as an element that impacted on the lives of many of the participants in a variety of complex ways throughout the life course. There was a high degree of consensus from the expert Maori informants and the participants about the potential protective factors associated with participation in various cultural activities. For example, programmes available during a prison sentence had had significant influence on the personal growth of some women in terms of discovering identities and learning about their culture. Likewise ongoing involvement with cultural groups after release had assisted some women with stabilising their lives.

Chapter Eleven

Wider Theoretical Implications and Discussion

The meta-factorial analysis and discussion of the major interconnecting themes that emerged from the data have implications for the broader explanatory theories of crime that were introduced earlier in Part Two of this study. The major theories will now be re-visited and related to the findings to illustrate points of theoretical similarity and difference.

This section begins the wider theoretical implications for the research by reconsidering the quotation from one of the participants, previously cited in Part Three. The comment was offered by a participant during the course of discussing her life history in relation to offending. It came at a moment when she was reflecting on the many variables that had been introduced as part of the interview, combined with her own individual history:

In this research it's a really big picture. You're looking at a big pool and the ripples start – there's all these individuals and a lot going on inside and out – with family. I feel I'm one of the lucky ones because I had what it took to stay out. I see it as a totally personal achievement.

The symbolism of the pool of water and the ripple effect of concentric circles in association with her individual will power, encapsulates the person-in-situation approach of social work. It reflects my professional theoretical background that contributed to the context of this research, and helps to explain the wide range of variables and multiple methods that were chosen in order to explore the problem of women's re-offending. At the core of this symbolism is the woman who is the offender who represents a unique, individual set of personal attributes and life experience. Her gender has been a defining element in that life experience.

The ripples in a pool offer a unifying framework for both macro and micro influences. I believe that the participant intended to convey the notion that many disparate events and influences act on an individual, and much like the notion of life course trajectories have the potential to impact throughout different life stages. The influences operate both internally and externally but, rather than view the person as a passive receiver, the participant reminds us that the individual will of the

person to make particular choices is in her view necessary for change to occur. Transformation will occur over time which will qualitatively alter both the person and the context.

I propose to return towards the ecological perspective of social work outlined from the imagery of the above quotation towards the end of this chapter. Before doing so, I am going to return to the major theories in regard to deviance and female offending that were introduced in Parts Two and Four.

The broad theories of deviance may be categorised as those that attribute deviance to individual pathology and those that attribute deviance to societal structures and social forces. The former originated from biological determinism and the latter from early sociology (Downes & Rock, 1988; Smith, 1995). The sociological theories can broadly be grouped into two major categories comprised firstly of consensus theories or those that assume a degree of societal agreement about values and what behaviour can be considered deviant (Durkheim, 1897; Merton, 1957). The second group are conflict theories that focus more on how some values are preferred over others and with the status of various behaviours (see Downes & Rock, 1988; Hagan, 1984). This latter focus takes into account the structural forces that may influence societal opinion about deviancy. It is advisable to reiterate at this stage, however, that these theories and the consecutive sub-theories in respective fields that proliferated during the latter half of the twentieth century, were formulated almost exclusively based on experience of research with male offenders and male offending (Chesney-Lind 1997; Naffine, 1997).

It is only in recent years that the major theories such as Merton's theory of *anomie* have been subjected to feminist critique, and have been redeveloped so that feminist concerns have begun to be accounted for (Broidy & Agnew, 1997; Chesney-Lind, 1997; Naffine, 1997). In addition to critically examining the major theories of deviance, feminist theorists have contributed new areas of theory particularly in regard to the role of victimisation in women's offending (Chesney-Lind, 1997; Katz, 2000). The notion of a *cycle of violence* (Widom, 1989), that links to life course trajectories as a consequence of victimisation, has highlighted the early involvement of victims of sexual abuse in criminal behaviour (Widom & Ames, 1994). Katz (2000) has shown how addressing victimisation has been critical for women in the desistance process.

Building on Durkheim and Merton's theory of *anomie*, strain theory attributes crime and deviance to the pressure brought about by the desire to achieve conventional goals in society and the inability to achieve these goals through legal means (Cohen, 1955). Criminal behaviour is thought to provide one means to achieve such goals. More recently the types of strain that may be experienced have been broadened so that they encompass the "...loss of positive stimuli like friends and romantic partners" and negative stimuli such as "...excessive demands and verbal/sexual/physical abuse" (Broidy & Agnew, 1997, p.4). *Revised strain theory* (Broidy & Agnew, 1997) proposes that the conventional goals that males aspire to may be different for females and, therefore, that strain theory (or *General Strain Theory* [GST] as Agnew describes it) needs revising to take account of gender difference. This allows the theory to be applied to women who may have different sources of economic and status strain in their lives than those associated with male motivation. *Strain theory* can account for a variety of oppressions in terms of stress, where gender oppression can readily be understood in relation to women's relative experience of status and goal achievement. Agnew argues that cognitive, behavioural and emotional factors may be involved in adaptation to strain and that involvement in crime may comprise one form of adaptation (1992). Likewise, women may experience qualitatively different cognitive, behavioural, and emotional factors in their response to strain (Broidy & Agnew, 1997). The women in this study experienced loss of "positive stimuli" at early stages in their lives, as a result of family dysfunction and disorganisation and a concomitant increase in exposure to verbal/physical and sexual abuse. Agnew (1992) would argue that their qualitatively different individual coping mechanisms meant that they became involved with crime and criminal behaviour.

The findings in this study that relate to the stresses and strain which participants experienced in relation to their economic situation and their status in the community, can also be related to the notion of revised strain theory. The majority of the participants experienced economic hardship and some responded to their respective situations with petty offending. Their experiences in terms of stigma and the constraint this imposed on their access to services, employment, and on interpersonal relationships, also adversely impacted on their lives.

The effect of economic hardship on women offenders has been well documented by a number of feminist criminologists (Carlen et al., 1985; 1988; Carlen & Worrall, 1987). Carlen's (1988) account of the difficulties faced by women offenders in England after release from prison, relates their working class origins and experience of poverty as critical to their involvement in crime. Her thesis

was that the effect of economic reform in Great Britain during the 1980s had materially disadvantaged women in ways that led to their greater involvement in begging, prostitution, drug abuse, and homelessness. Women's increased reliance on benefit fraud as a means to advance materially, made them more vulnerable to prosecution, particularly in a climate where there was a greater emphasis of "new right" economic policies on punitive control of social security. Thus, working class women due to their economic vulnerability were subject to pressure to offend. This is where conflict theory is more able to account for structural disadvantage and for the impact of criminal justice systems and for the effect of "official" notions of deviance.

The majority of participants in this study described the effects of low income in a variety of ways. Particular stress was experienced by women responsible for young children, sometimes resulting in the decision to re-offend. The overall economic status of the participants indicated a relatively high level of debt due to the level of individual incomes and lack of accumulated material assets. Marxist conflict theory, however, does not explain how economic hardship impacted on participants in different ways across the life course and how economic vulnerability varied according to different life circumstances.

The participants were more likely to describe economic factors as impacting in a developmental fashion and to be connected to their reliance on either the state or on partners for economic support at different times in their lives. In terms of life stages, a high level of economic vulnerability was reported in the period immediately after release from prison and in the ongoing ability to provide for dependent children. Economic factors were not necessarily connected by the majority of participants to re-offending; rather they were constantly re-occurring factors. Alongside the influence of economic factors in terms of conflict theory is the relative status of the recidivist offender who risks additional societal opprobrium due to recurrent re-offending.

In terms of official notions of deviancy, the risk scales of the Department of Corrections result in particular labels being ascribed to groups of offenders. The high risk scores of a significant minority of the participants remained with them even after seven years of residence in the community. This group risked higher penalties should they re-offend after release, despite changes they may have made in the intervening years. This reflected the reliance of official criminality measures on unalterable historical factors.

The participants described a range of barriers to their adjustment in the community that were connected to their status as released offenders. The effects of *stigma* were noted in terms of dealing with official agencies, such as the Department of Work and Income and with other social service agency personnel. More positive relationships were associated with personnel who treated them with respect and made them feel welcome. Negative experiences tended to constrain the participants from re-establishing contact with some agencies. The range of social contacts after release from prison was limited with little involvement with the surrounding community.

Barriers to employment based on the response of employers to a history of imprisonment were described to the extent that the majority of participants no longer viewed employment as a realistic life goal. Likewise education and training were viewed as out of reach on the basis of lack of economic resources. Both barriers combined served to trap the participants into ongoing economic dependence on others for support, with little option for future self development. The willingness to enter relationships that the participants understood to be detrimental to their wellbeing was also symptomatic of their inability to achieve financial independence and their lack of access to other means of avoiding social isolation.

The barriers to achieving economic independence, employment and further training or education may be explained by *revised strain theory* in that at various times in their lives the participants described re-offending in response to economic pressures. The participants expressed the desire to fulfil life goals but these goals comprised a more complex expression of the conventional goals usually associated with strain theory. The majority of participants may have desired worthwhile employment, further education and career prospects but these were seen as unattainable. The majority were committed to social/family goals of increased connectedness, familial stability, and parenting as these were seen as achievable. The small minority of the participants, who had succeeded in obtaining employment that offered them a career structure and further skills training, were proud and positive about the benefits of their careers and how these had fostered their desistance process. In other words, the operation of strain theory needs to be seen in terms of the differential situation of women and the impact of women's traditional gendered roles. Traditional gendered roles offer women alternative life goals that do not necessarily conform to male perceptions of desirable social goals. Significant socio-structural changes would need to occur before the group of women participants in this study may perceive their access to education and employment as achievable-in the meantime they tended to rely on their traditional nurturing roles.

Revised strain theory is more able to take account of the values that women, as opposed to men, may place on particular social goals. The strongest theme to emerge from the data was the value the participants placed on social connectedness. The quality of social relationships also distinguished the participants' accounts in terms of the influence of relative power and abuse.

Arguably, *control theory* with its emphasis on the degree of attachment to conventional society and to the network of conventional relationships in which individuals are expected to participate, may assist with explaining the respective roles of women. However, *revised control theory* (Blackwell, 2000) which does take account of women's differential role in relationships, particularly in regard to the effect of patriarchy, is less able to account for victimisation, psychological harm, and the coping strategies that women may adopt in order to deal with its effects. Revised control theory may help to explain the marked disparity between male and female offending in terms of differential social controls and response to sanctions, but is less able to explain why women in fact continue to offend despite these differences. Interestingly, though, Gottfredson & Hirschi's development of control theory in relation to male re-offending may have some application in understanding the *immediate* factors influencing female re-offending (1990). The re-offender group in this study reported greater influence from feelings of being "out of control" and of impulsiveness just prior to committing an offence than the non-offender group. This may well offer a fruitful line of enquiry in future research about immediate crime factors and female offenders.

Social learning theory and its derivative in criminology of *differential association* can be linked to control theory in that its focus is on the impact of social relationships and social attachments (Hoffman, 2003). The participants in this study were found to be at higher risk of re-offending when they associated with others who were actively offending. Conversely, they appeared to be protected from re-offending when they were situated in a network of pro-social relationships.

The preceding three theories are unable to account for substance dependency and the impact of substance use on the affected sub-group in this study. A higher incidence of substance dependency was detected in the re-offender's group. This suggests an association between substance dependency and re-offending with the *caveat* that there was a range of dependency and those sub-types were not specifically explored in relation to re-offending. That is, opioid dependency was not separated from alcohol and other substances in the final synthesis of the data. Given the environmental stressors in

the participants' lives, the concept of *diathesis-stress theory* (Meehl, 1962, & Bleuler, 1963, cited in Monroe & Simons, 1991) has application in helping to explain why some women were affected by substance dependency and not others. It may also help to explain differential effects of dependency and a possible link between substance use and criminal offending. In other words, individual participants may have the predisposition to become substance dependent as the result of a variety of stressors. Dependency was, for example, linked by participants to coping with victimisation and its effects. The participants who had been successful in attaining the methadone treatment programme in Christchurch described their need to commit high levels of crime to support their prior reliance on illegal substances. Diathesis-stress theory helps to explain the biological impact of substance use on individual behaviour coupled with the life stressors the participants experienced.

The psycho-social development of individuals across the life course and the major life events that may impact on re-offending are not accounted for by the above theories (Thornberry, 1997). The retrospective and narrative findings in this study appear to indicate that at developmentally different stages the participants were more affected by particular life events. Their entry into crime was frequently precipitated by responses to early victimisation and running away from home. Running away from home created vulnerability to the vicissitudes of surviving on the streets and was accompanied by petty crime, substance abuse, and homelessness. Exposure to substance abuse and the development of early substance dependency led to, in some instances, long term psycho-social consequences. Childbearing and responsibility for children created another set of factors that impacted upon the participants, including distressful separation, and reunification issues, and the financial costs of supporting families.

The impact of victimisation (and often repeat victimisation) was felt throughout the life course, with therapeutic intervention seen as necessary for addressing its outfall. Participants reported repeated victimisation in relationships which were characterised by the abuse of power and control. Chesney-Lind (1997) has linked victimisation to the overall social disadvantage of women offender populations.

Laub & Sampson (1993) have introduced the concept of "cumulative disadvantage" in terms of re-offending wherein the four key elements of family, school, peers and the response of state institutions contribute to an interactive model of influences on re-offending. Giordano, Cernkovich and Rudolph have combined strain and control theories in a longitudinal follow-up of serious female

offenders (2002). They observed the long term impact of trajectories of cumulative stress and disadvantage in the lives of female offenders (Giordano et al., 2002). The stories of the women in this study support the notion of cumulative disadvantage in a developmental sense in a multitude of areas, but particularly in regard to their ongoing experience of violence and abuse. The negative impact of these experiences permeated their lives and, therefore, victimisation needs to be included in appreciating the significant areas of disadvantage they experienced.

Developmental theories (Thornberry, 1997) more readily account for the maturational stages of women, where child-bearing years and being responsible for children clearly impacted on individual decision-making. In addition, the notion of “getting too old for it” was described by the older women who participated, and perhaps referred to the consequences of the risks and stress associated with an offending lifestyle.

Developmental psychology may also help to explain how the deleterious effects of multiple disadvantages impact differentially on offenders at different age stages. The participants described a range of psychological difficulties, ranging from substance dependency to depression. At different maturational stages these issues appear to have been responded to differently. Although neither of these factors was predominant in terms of the re-offending sub-group, they were nevertheless constant themes throughout the narrative accounts for the majority of participants.

The symbolic imagery from a participant that opened this theoretical discussion illustrates the complexity of re-offending and desistance from offending, and hints at the variety of external effects that may impact on individuals in their pathways to addressing re-offending. It balances these factors with the role of individual agency and the intention and will to change behaviour. The ripples in the pool denote the variety of variables that interact and interrelate in the immediate decision to desist and in the ongoing process of desistance. This process is not necessarily linear in the sense that offending will suddenly cease, rather it can be seen as developmental, with significant changes made at different life stages. The process was described as involving relapse and recovery in terms of behaviour change.

An ecological view of human behaviour that takes account of developmental stages during the life course offers an alternative perspective on re-offending and desistance from offending.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective resonates with the imagery of the participant's view that began this chapter:

The ecology of human development involves the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by relations between these settings and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded (1979, p.21).

Here Bronfenbrenner extends behaviourist assumptions of human ecological systems to encompass the contexts within which they exist. As such, it encapsulates the concept of the individual interacting with a range of variables that alter across the life course and reflects the core principles of a social work perspective. However, as with other social systemic explanations for human behaviour (Germain, 1981; Meyer & Mattaini, 1995), Bronfenbrenner's extension of social ecology is less able to account for relative power and the influence of race, gender, culture, and class on the structural context of human transactions.

More recent developments in social work theory and elsewhere, have challenged the ecological assumption of a "natural" homeostasis where human relationships and interactions are concerned (Ungar, 2002). Feminist postmodern theory requires the deconstruction of such assumptions so that the power of the practitioner, researcher, and academic is also taken into account in terms of defining others' realities (Chambon, Irving & Epstein, 1999). The relative power exercised at both micro and macro level interactions has been expressed more fully by Leonard (1997) and accords with some of the concerns of feminist criminologists in terms of understanding offending.

An ecological life model more adequately explains the multiple sources of influence on the participants' lives described in this study. It also accommodates the micro to macro influences on social interactions that impact on human behaviour in immediate situations, and across the life course in terms of Germain and Gitterman's life model of social work practice (1996). However, a critical feminist approach is also necessary in order to appreciate how the attribute of gender impacts on the lives of women, including the lives of women offenders. The discourse of power and abuse of power within intimate relationships, and in the wider networks of human relationships, assists the understanding of why particular groups in society act and react in different ways. It is this discourse

that has the potential to reveal why marked disparities exist within and between sub-populations and how inequalities continue to entrench structural and personal disadvantage. It is not enough, however, to deconstruct because having reached the conclusion that inequalities exist, feminist and social work praxis then demands that we consider the implications for social action.

The participants in this study represent a sub-group of the wider community that share the experience of imprisonment and associated facets of the criminal justice system. It is also a group that shares multiple disadvantages that, for the majority, had their origins in families that in many cases were unable for a variety of reasons to provide safe and secure childhood environments. The extent of historical violence, abuse, and neglect that this group experienced inevitably leaves the researcher with the lasting impression of individuals who have survived despite the extraordinary barriers they encountered. The accounts of the participants provide a stark reminder that violence prevention and early intervention are probably necessary prerequisites to ensuring that the cycle of deprivation does not persist. The next and final sections deal with the “social action” questions raised by this research. Having been invited into the participants’ homes and having shared many of their painful recollections, it is incumbent on the researcher to proceed to re-construct through the making of suggestions for future policy and practice.

11.1 Towards integration of deviance and life course theories

It is clear from the preceding discussion that the results of this study including the life experiences recounted by the participants, illustrate a variety of theories and explanations for involvement in criminal re-offending. The quantitative portion of the interview schedule elicited information that was cross-sectional and offered a contemporaneous perspective on the participants’ re-offending at the time of the interview. In this sense, the information offered a “snapshot” of factors associated with re-offending and desistance from offending. Much of the secondary data from the Probation files also offered sets of factors and reflections that explained recent offence behaviour related to specific pre-sentence reports, and speculation as to why women continued to re-offend. The data from the informed experts tended to confirm the major categories already highlighted by the previous methods of data collection, but added new dimensions in relation to the impact of intimate partners on offending behaviour.

The results of this contemporaneous analysis have been linked primarily to revised strain and revised control theories. In relation to revised strain theory, this is on the basis of the impact of external pressures such as negative family-context stimuli on individual behaviour. In relation to revised control theory this is on the basis of the quality and forms of attachment to conventional relationships that mitigate against re-offending and that promote involvement in offending. Control theory can also be related to the immediate factors that influence women just prior to an offence being committed in relation to lack of internal control.

Differential association can be related to both re-offending and desistance through the impact of peer relationships. The re-offenders were more likely to be associating with active offenders whilst the non-offenders were more likely to be involved with pro-social networks.

The qualitative data offered similar broad categories and reflections on re-offending, but with the major difference from the life history question being that at different stages of life, different sets of influences applied. In other words, re-offending in adolescence was related more to substance abuse for example, than at mid-life stages.

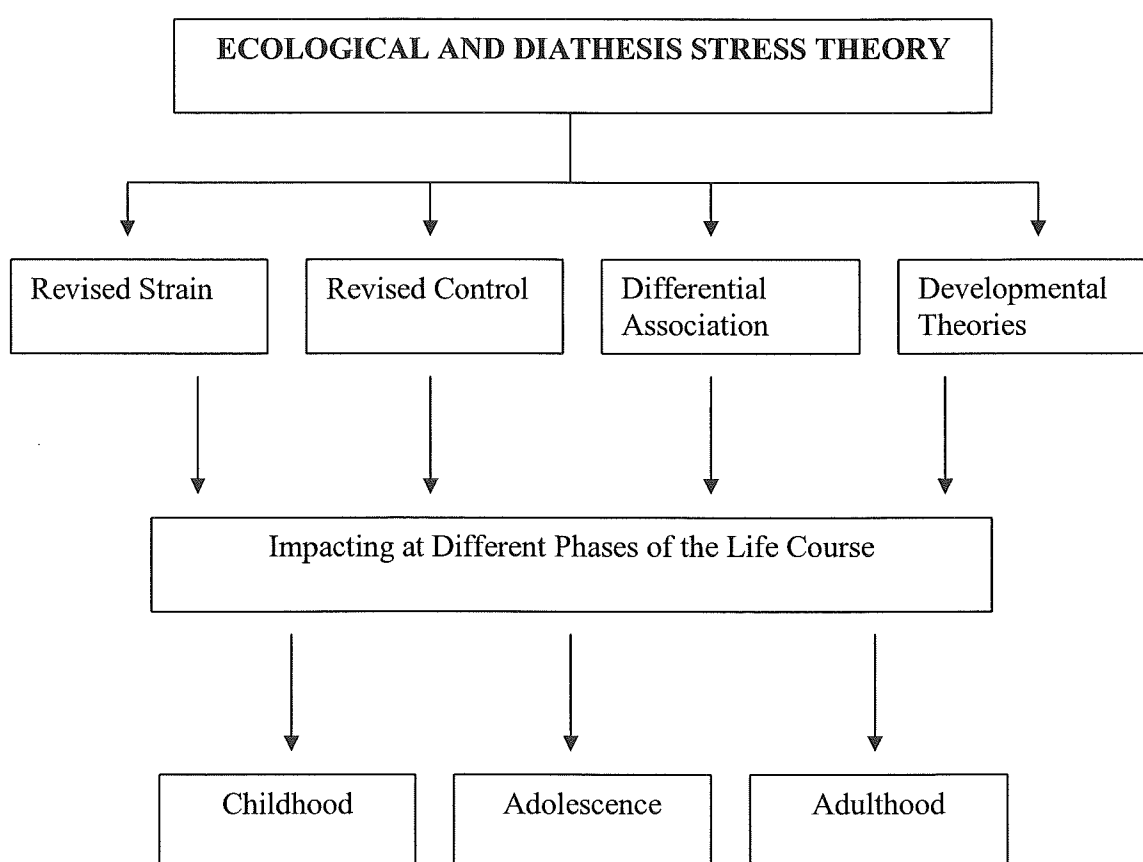
The qualitative reflections on re-offending also revealed the pervasive, cumulative effect of early and repeat victimisation. Individual accounts related the gradual therapeutic treatment of victimisation as necessary to the desistance process. Historical data from the Probation files reinforced the impact of multiple disadvantage in early childhood, including early victimisation and the notion of cumulative disadvantage across the life course. Additional data from the informed experts' reflections on re-offending also contributed to the longitudinal appreciation of cumulative disadvantage, particularly concerning re-offenders' involvement with violent and abusive intimate partners.

Integration of revised strain, revised control, differential association, and diathesis-stress theories is possible when these are subsumed under a developmental-life course framework. This allows for the understanding of women's re-offending behaviour as the result of specific strains and controls at different stages in their lives. It also, and arguably more importantly, allows for the notion of cumulative disadvantage as a result of the life course transitions and trajectories that pervade their histories. Developmental theory acknowledges that at different life stages individuals are likely to

respond to external influences in different ways as a result of their cognitive, affective and behavioural states (Germain & Gitterman, 1996; Thornberry, 1997).

The following diagram envisages this integration as developmental-life course theory providing the overarching framework within which more immediate influences of the remaining theories can be comprehended.

Figure 11.1 Toward an integration of deviance and life course theories



By placing re-offending within this framework of individual pathways to re-offending and to desistance, the explanation as to why some women respond to specific and multiple life disadvantages by criminal re-offending can be explained in relation to a complex inter-relationship of extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Their desistance may also be explained by the comparative impact of external and internal disadvantages and by resultant differing capacities to address a range of re-offending issues. The implications of this theory integration are that at different stages in the life course different interventions will be more or less appropriate given the diverse influences on

individual pathways of criminal recidivism. A single approach to the treatment of women's re-offending, or even a limited approach, will not be effective in the desistance process given the diverse external stressors and individual capacities for coping with disadvantage, demonstrated by the participants in this study.

11.2 Policy Implications

10.2.1 Risk and criminogenic needs prediction measures

The implications of reliance on prediction measures that may inaccurately reflect female re-offending are that decision-making processes in the New Zealand criminal justice system may be either unduly lenient or unduly harsh. On the one hand, female offenders may be advantaged by the lack of official knowledge of "real" risk of re-offending and, on the other, they may be seriously disadvantaged in terms of their classification and eligibility for various rights and privileges in the criminal justice system.

A feminist-emancipatory perspective would argue that over-classification according to criteria that are heavily weighted in the favour of historical factors (over which offenders have little control) will have a cumulative disempowering effect on women. The theoretical underpinnings for the choice of factors in the first instance reflect assumptions about women's socio-economic position and their applicability. This study raises questions about the gendered value judgements attached to employment, for example, and how useful these are in terms of the way they are considered at present. Being a full-time parent may well constitute purposeful employment for a woman in a way that is not reflected in current measures. Clearly in terms of life goals the majority of participants in this study viewed family life and having children as more attainable and valuable to them than education and employment-related goals.

Women may well not perceive the advantage in addressing their offending if they are condemned to high-risk labelling for the rest of their lives. The question arises as to what point offenders can expect that they may no longer be labelled in this way and whether the harsher penalties they are exposed to as a result of the labels of recidivism, in fact reflect their risk of re-offending. Certainly, the historical factors of risk measurement in no way help to explain the fact that many women offenders manage to succeed despite the prediction.

This study also raises questions about measures of recidivism and whether the harsher penalties that automatically apply to a recidivist offender allow for the progress that women may make in addressing their offending. The notion of addressing offending as a developmental process means that it will be inevitable that, due to a range of situational factors, some of which may be beyond the offenders' control, they may relapse. Bagaric (2000) has discussed the dual punishment attendant on recidivism where offenders are doubly penalised based on both the offence and their character. The removal of suspended sentences from the array of sentencing options for judges in criminal justice jurisdictions in New Zealand has meant the loss of a mechanism that was able to recognise such individual progress.⁷³ My own anecdotal experience of having a client dealt with in this way through suspended sentencing in recognition of her positive progress, suggests that this can be a powerful incentive to continue to progress. Distrusting the discretionary assessment of judges of the situational factors impacting on the individual, and instead relying on actuarial measures of risk, means that offenders have less incentive to progress. Where women offenders are concerned, with lower overall rates of recidivism and less violent offending, there is strong justification for taking a more lateral approach to sentencing.

11.2.2 Economic issues

Economic policies which increase the legal incomes, particularly of single mothers, and reduce overall disadvantage may well serve to reduce the level of strain that released women experience. The few participants (all in the non-offenders group) who had been successful in obtaining employment had gone on to achieve in their respective occupations. Their sense of pride in the distance they had achieved from their prior criminal lifestyles was palpable during the interviews. Whilst employment was not a commonly declared goal for many of the participants, it seemed to have had the potential to positively impact on their lives. Their level of income meant that their economic positions were significantly better than those of the remaining participants.

The fact that the majority of participants did not see employment and further education and training as achievable goals, has wider implications for the community at large. The experience of poverty, which for many participants was intergenerational, meant a lack of opportunity and expectation in regard to their goals in life. This is not to say that traditional family and parenting roles are not

⁷³ This option was removed with the passing of the Sentencing and Parole Reform Bill in 1999.

satisfying and rewarding goals in themselves, but that this group of women did not perceive viable alternatives. As a consequence of their employment and education status, their backgrounds, and the stigma attached to imprisonment, they were for the most part dependent on others for economic support. Where women are dependent on income support available through state benefits, it is critical that these are sufficient to enable women to provide for their children. Income insufficiency contributed to immediate decisions to offend, and over the life course had impacted on their offending.

The economic strain attached to the immediate post-release period clearly created difficulties for the majority of participants. In some cases, this influenced a return to prostitution as a viable means to increase their income. It also meant that availability and accessibility of social services was critical in this period. Crime prevention policy needs to adopt a more proactive stance in regard to this period of release, in terms of income support and social services. Enhancing the ability of agencies such as PARS, that are contracted by the Department of Corrections to provide post-release support, has the potential to relieve the level of stress experienced by released inmates at the time. The suggestion from two expert informants that an “aggressive outreach” service that offers co-ordination, referral, and advocacy should be investigated, may well offer a potential model for further development in this area. Such a role would require the co-operation of prisons in terms of information sharing and liaison. At present, PARS fieldworkers have limited access to prisons, based on the service contract the organisation has with central government. There is potential to considerably enhance and expand pre-release and post-release co-ordination and continuation, thereby enabling workers to provide a prevention service rather than the reactive service it tends to provide at present.

Fundamentally, the amount of re-establishment money available through the Department of Work and Income (DWI) on release from prison is woefully inadequate by objective measures of post-release costs. Greater co-operation between DWI and organisations such as PARS has the potential to develop ways of enhancing income support during this critical period. Enabling selective increase of the base line establishment grants in order to reflect the individual circumstances of the offender, will allow for more successful adjustment at this time. Concerns about the misuse of direct money transfers may be resolved through proactive case management by Department of Work and Income Case Managers.

The historical debt that released prisoners have with the DWI, and are faced with in the process of integration, needs to be reconsidered in terms of the role of the Department at this time. It seems particularly punitive to insist that this debt is repaid after serving a term of imprisonment where the punishment has been separation from the community. To refuse to mitigate the debt burden of released inmates, calls into question commitment by the State to assist prisoners to re-integrate. The constraints that the debt imposes in terms of access to both recoverable and non-recoverable grants materially affect mothers' access to additional assistance at this time. It makes perhaps more understandable, that released women are likely to resort to prostitution or to known and successful illegal means to obtain income during this period. It may be possible to improve the assistance provided to released inmates by ensuring that full and thorough assessment is completed by an agency such as PARS that assists in determining the optimum type of additional practical aid required given the individual circumstances of the case.

11.2.3 Social issues

A range of social issues were significant for released women, both in terms of contributing to re-offending and protection from offending. This has implications for the assessment of risk and for addressing re-offending.

The influence of others who are actively offending appears to be a feature particularly associated with women's re-offending. Criminal associates may be intimate partners, family members and friends or associates. The quality of these relationships seems to impact on re-offending in a variety of ways depending on the nature of the relationship. Where intimate partners were active offenders, both participants and informed experts indicated that this presented a risk to released women. Where family members were involved with offending, it became a normalised part of family life. Where gang associations were involved, offending was a part of the expectations of gang culture and participants were expected to participate. Many of these relationships were also characterised by elements of abuse, misuse of power and exertion of control over women's lives.

Access to prison programmes and educational programmes in the community that focus on relationship issues and personal growth, may well assist women to better identify the negative effects of some of their key social networks in the community. Knowledge and understanding about the effects of domestic violence needs to be central to this type of programme. Without the

knowledge and information about cycles of abuse and power misuse in relationships, it is not surprising that women return to dysfunctional kinds of relationships.

A similar practice approach would be required of the range of social service personnel likely to work with released women. The Probation service needs to encourage staff to be familiar and skilled with issues relating to the impact of relationships on their clients' re-offending. It is likely that some staff have more highly developed skills in this area, particularly where they have undertaken relationship skills training prior to entering the service. However, there was a strong sense of inevitability about some clients' re-offending, based on the quality of their close relationships.

Clearly some Probation officers, social workers and other agency workers had had a life-changing impact on their clients, and the quality of the therapeutic aspects of these relationships warrants further investigation in order to distinguish why some were more effective than others. Other professionals who were mentioned in this manner were the sexual abuse counsellors with whom some women engaged whilst in prison. The qualities that were most valued in agency personnel by the participants in this study were empathy, respect, stamina (the ability not to give up), and being friendly. Clearly, an advanced ability to establish and maintain rapport with clients was a valued attribute. Continuity in terms of service personnel was also valued by the participants and seemed to assist their ongoing acceptance and willingness to accept support.

Personal social support was associated with protection from offending and this was characterised as pro-social types of relationships. Those women who had entered employment had developed a different non-offending social network. Prior to obtaining employment the support of non-offending family members was critical in assisting them with re-establishment in the community. Access to non-offending family was unlikely in many instances, and this means that social services and social sponsorship assume greater importance as alternatives to family networks. However, involvement with social services appeared to be haphazard, dependent on limited information and not the subject of pre-release planning. A pre-release plan that is put in place as a matter of course towards the end of a sentence of imprisonment would also need a designated outreach worker to assist in its implementation for this measure to be effective.

Six types of prison programmes that may have the potential to enhance the development of pro-social relationships are:

- Access to Outward Bound type courses
- Recreational teams that include community participation
- Access to further work-related skills in Polytechnics or with similar providers
- Improved access to further education
- Participation in community projects involving a range of voluntary work skills
- Enhanced family/whanau visiting programmes.

Palmer (1994) in his meta-review of reintegrative programmes and Immarageon (1995) both describe the above types of prison pre-release programmes as worthwhile in terms of their research on effectiveness in addressing re-offending.

It is ironic that, in the process of separating offenders from the community, their opportunities to establish new, pro-social connections are limited. Severe limitations on pre-release parole possibilities also limit social integration. The recent Parole and Sentencing Act (1999) has further proscribed parole eligibility and restricted the types of paroles available for reintegrative purposes. Programmes such as the above may counteract the deleterious consequences of these restrictions by helping to create opportunities for social integration.

After release, the barriers to employment and education require further investigation in order to make these options achievable for released inmates. This is where an “aggressive outreach” social service role may assist in terms of the post-release period. The findings strongly suggest it would be advantageous if substance abuse treatment needs were part of both pre-release and post-release planning, where this has been identified as a significant need. Probation services cease after limited periods of supervision. The limited availability and focus of supervision means that there is no oversight in the sense of through care for released prisoners who are not subject to statutory supervision requirements or for those who have completed their supervision periods. Given the value that the participants placed on consistency and continuity there may be an advantage to a statutory role in terms of generic support for released women from the Community Probation Service on a voluntary basis.

11.2.4 *Substance dependency*

Dependency on illegal substances was a significant issue for the majority of inmates at some stage after release. This impacted on their economic position and mental and physical health. The unavailability of the methadone programme was a key factor in some women's re-offending. Speedier access to the methadone programme would have assisted this group of women to address their offending closer to their release. The possibility of resuming methadone treatment and being stabilised before release from prison would have the potential to assist transition into the community.

Residential treatment options for women in the Christchurch area have altered considerably since 1999 with the establishment of more choices for women⁷⁴. This is likely to have impacted on referrals since methadone treatment is no longer the sole option for intravenous drug users.

The continuing level of cannabis use widely accepted by the participants as legitimate and necessary to their mental health, is an ongoing concern that warrants further attention. The level of use continues to pose a risk of apprehension since it was frequently associated with minor dealing.

11.2.5 *Cultural issues*

Access to programmes in prison that had provided inmates with knowledge and education in *tikanga* Maori was valued by the participants in this study. Irrespective of whether this influenced their re-offending, these programmes clearly led to significant personal growth in some instances. The availability of other types of programmes developed within a strong *kaupapa* Maori perspective, such as *Mana Wahine*, was also valued by those women who were in prison at the time that these were available. Maintaining connections with cultural networks during a prison sentence may reduce the likelihood of further alienation from possible release support. Continued iwi involvement on a regular basis, as part of prison visiting, has the potential to strengthen connections with traditional support networks.

⁷⁴ This has been reported by the Alcohol and Drug Association of NZ in *ADA Connection*, Vol 2, No.16, 4 September, 2003

11.2.6 Victimisation and violence

The experience of victimisation affected many of the participants throughout the life course and their access to therapeutic counselling was a key factor in addressing their re-offending. Continuing access to sexual abuse counselling for women in prison will continue to offer the opportunity to address the multitude of issues abuse raises for women in terms of their lives.

More effective early intervention for many of the participants might have meant a different life course in terms of their entry into offending. The systems in place to assist families with serious care and protection issues clearly failed in the case of many of the participants. The fact that the majority were able to leave their schooling in their early adolescence, without effective intervention, meant their increased affiliation to other youth already on the streets. It also exposed them to the risks of street prostitution and to substance abuse. More effective measures are needed in early intervention in families and schools with more stringent, ongoing monitoring of school attendance in order to address the early precursors of criminal offending.

The violence that some women experienced in the prison environment also impacted on their adjustment after release. Prison management regimes need to take account of the backgrounds of women offenders in order to avoid re-victimisation. Re-victimisation was reported not just in terms of physical violence by other inmates but also in terms of verbal abuse of some prison staff towards inmates. Palmer (1994) in reference to the non-programmatic aspects of programmes for offenders has referred to qualities of respect, compassion and dedication as associated with effectiveness. Bill (1998) has related this to women offenders specifically as requiring prison staff with the ability to reduce inmates' feelings of powerlessness and worthlessness. Supportive prison staff who were empathetic with inmates had the potential to influence personal change particularly in regard to addressing the effects of sexual abuse. There was a widely held distrust of prison complaints systems that warrants further investigation. Whilst such distrust continues, inmates are constrained in their ability to address grievances during their prison sentences. An independent review of current complaint mechanisms would be necessary in order for inmates to feel able to discuss their concerns and for a more real sense of the level of misuse and abuse of power to be disclosed.

11.3 Limitations of the Study

This study involved relatively small numbers of released inmates and, therefore, the findings need to be viewed within the constraints that this imposed. This has been partly offset by the combined methodological approaches employed.

The sample selection may have been influenced by dual biases of prior association with the researcher and current engagement with social services. It is difficult to know how this may have influenced the research outcome. It is possible that once released inmates knew about the purpose of the research it tended to be more attractive to those who had addressed their offending because these women may have wanted to express their personal pride in having made changes. However, the number of participants who disclosed actively offending during the interview mitigates against this possibility.

Subgroups of offenders were studied collectively, including one life sentencee, and this may well have disguised significant differences between subgroups. The cross-sectional nature of the study also limited in-depth longitudinal consideration of offending processes although the retrospective data provided some data relevant to these. Furthermore, the cross-sectional nature of the data makes it difficult to draw causal links between variables, although it does allow for possible associations to be made. Despite such inevitable drawbacks, the current research, along with other research and writing in this field in New Zealand, adds to our understanding of important potential associations between factors in women's lives, and re-offending that warrant further investigation.

11.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Further research is needed with greater numbers of participants that builds on both the Moth & Hudson report (1999) and the current study. More research with greater numbers of female offenders would have the potential to further investigate the outcomes of research to date. The theoretical underpinnings of future research involving women need to be considered in order to avoid overlooking the importance of such gender issues that this study has highlighted.

There is a need to begin to consider separate categories of female offenders given the differences that exist in regard to substance dependency, for example. The single life sentencee who participated

in this study illustrated marked differences in terms of criminal aetiology from the other participants. This group particularly warrants separate investigation in terms of the possible impact of domestic violence. Bungay's account of women murderers in New Zealand illustrates the prevalence of domestic violence in their life histories (1998).

Cultural factors require further consideration and, given the concerns expressed in the consultation phase, this requires sensitivity to the possible repercussions on Maori of the interpretation and use of research outcomes. The notion that cultural attributes are predictive of re-offending contains all the risks attendant on eugenicism and the criminal justice implications of the use of this type of information. Maori need, therefore, to be integrally involved with the design and implementation of any such research.

The emergence of an ecological life course perspective on offending that considers precursors and underlying mechanisms that contribute to ongoing offending warrants further investigation (Sampson & Laub, 1995). Additionally, a case-study approach may offer further insight into the impact of significant life transitions for women and how these mediate re-offending during the life course.

The situation of mothers and children requires greater attention in terms of both research and policy in regard to the effects of imprisonment and particularly the difficulties of transition back into the community. This group appeared to have the greatest income insufficiency in terms of their re-establishment needs.

The women's prison institutions and the Community Probation service need to consider the effectiveness of pre-release and integration programmes. The preoccupation with serious risk disguises a multitude of release needs which are likely to be widely shared by released inmates. Such needs may not be criminogenic in the sense that they may not immediately lead to re-offending, but if they are not met they are likely to increase the social distress of individuals trying to adjust to new circumstances. Such distress contributes to the overall strain experienced by the released inmate which in turn may contribute to decisions to re-offend. Resorting to prostitution for economic reasons inherently expose this group to further types of stresses that may detrimentally impact on their lives and the lives of their families.

Finally, the greater emphasis in recent years on reinforcing penalties in the New Zealand criminal justice system by increasing sentences, parole periods and supervision length through the Parole and Sentencing Act revisions (1999), bears investigation as these measures impact on women. Women offenders constitute a smaller proportion of offenders and are on the whole sentenced for less violent offences (Moth & Hudson, 1999). There have been no parole violations by women in the Christchurch area where serious harm has been caused to the community. There have been no escapes from Christchurch Women's Prison in its 30 year history (personal communication with previous Unit Manager, April, 2004). The justification for harsher penalties has been based on the risk of serious male offending and violations of parole (submissions to the Parole and Sentencing Act, 1999). The differential impact of these changes on women offenders bears investigation on the basis of equity and fairness.

Conclusion to Part Four

The findings from this study support the notion of women's re-offending and their desistance from offending as linked to an amalgam of exogenous and endogenous influences over the life course. Contemporaneous assessment of re-offending highlights the influence of specific influences. In relation to re-offending these influences include association with active criminal associates, substance dependency, economic strain and lack of social supports. In relation to protection from offending embeddedness in pro-social networks involving family, friends and significant others assisted desistance. For a minority of non-offenders, employment, further education, and training were critical in the desistance process. Addressing substance dependency was also necessary for the non-offender group.

The qualitative data supported the notion of re-offending and desistance as involving ongoing processes of relapse and recovery. This data strongly suggest that the long term impact of childhood and repeat victimisation needs to be addressed in the desistance process. The qualitative data also highlighted the effect of economic strain at different stages of the life course, affecting women in different ways. Those women in the study who were responsible for dependent children were under greater economic stress than single women and they described offending in order to provide for their children.

Both the groups of re-offenders and non-offenders shared significant areas of disadvantage over the life course. The effect of cumulative disadvantage, including repeat victimisation, impacted on the level of social distress recounted by the participants.

The theoretical implications of the data support a model of women's recidivism and desistance from offending that includes revised strain and control theories to account for the gendered aspects of societal pressures in the first instance, and the quality of social attachments in the latter. The theory of differential association as it relates to the quality of social attachments, particularly in regard to associating with active offenders, is also applicable. These theories need to be considered within a developmental life course framework that recognises that they operate in different ways across the life course and that they are linked to individual life course transitions and trajectories.

The implications of the findings and this theoretical perspective for criminal justice policy are that it needs to be responsive to the diverse needs of women offenders during sentencing, when incarcerated, and in their transition back to the community. Responsiveness requires recognising the diverse elements of women's re-offending and desistance process by providing effective interventions that address the intersecting issues of economic marginality, substance dependency, social alienation, victimisation and mental illness. Responsive sentencing policy would focus on alternatives to incarceration that recognise the overall lower level of risk to the community that female inmates represent. Community sanctions involving enhanced social service provision, treatment options and parole programmes would enhance reintegration prospects. Responsive prison policy would seek to enhance women's reintegration by maintaining family relationships and meaningful relationships with children through visiting and parole programmes. It would encourage community involvement with prisons so that community linkages could be made prior to release. The quality of prison staff should ensure that empathic and respectful interactions that recognise different cultural beliefs are fostered, so that women are not further disempowered.

Criminal justice policy intersects with social policy at the point of return to the community and reintegration. This is the point at which the various government departments need to intersect also in providing a unified approach to support and rehabilitation on release. The notion of a proactive social work role based on advocacy and brokerage and available to released inmates, would go some way towards the implementation of this linkage. Here distributive justice through more comprehensive material and financial assistance would ease the transition to the community. Better access to employment, education and training opportunities throughout imprisonment and then in the community, would assist women's economic independence and offer viable alternatives to offending relationships and lifestyles.

The abiding overall impressions gained from working with this group of released women inmates were their honesty, their courage, and their will to survive. The life histories illustrated lives that had been marked by traumatic violence and abuse, often reported with more overt distress by social service workers, given the degree of accommodation by many of the participants to the quality of their existence. Perhaps if care and protection systems were more effective in terms of the families and communities of origin, these women would not have entered the life pathways that inevitably led to alienation, isolation, and offending associations.

The participants displayed a considerable degree of equanimity about the consequences of their actions and no participants expressed resentment about the punishment they had received. Some resentment was expressed about the attitudes and belittling treatment they had encountered at various stages of the criminal justice system.

I have the utmost admiration for the strength and determination of these women who allowed me to interview them. Their continued progress in the face of negative attitudes, expectations and beliefs ought to be commended. Their ability to overcome their internal battles with substance dependency, abuse and other issues in addition to sustaining employment and advancing their skills, are achievements that deserve the kind of acclamation that New Zealand society only accords sporting successes. Their effort to create some stability and a measure of prosperity for their children was frequently at the cost of their own needs. The workers who sometimes had years of contact with them, reflected a similar level of admiration for this group of women.

Social service personnel also need greater recognition for their efforts. The combined years of service and experience shared by the people who were consulted during the course of this research, demonstrates a commitment to others that is rarely acclaimed. The participants referred to these workers as people who had made a difference to them, and whose relationships with them were characterised by genuine concern for clients and commitment to their needs.

References

- Abramson, M. (1996). Reflections on Knowing Oneself Ethically: Toward a Working Framework for Social Work Practice, *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, April, 195-201.
- Acker, S. (2000). In/Out/Side: Positioning the Researcher in Feminist Qualitative Research (1), *Resources for Feminist Research*, Fall-Winter, 153-174.
- Acker, J., Barry, J., & Esseveld, J. (1991). Objectivity and Truth: Problems in Doing Feminist Research. In M. M. Fonow, & J. A. Cook, (Eds.), *Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research*. (pp. 119-132). Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Adams, R., Dominelli, L. & Payne, M. (Eds.), (1998). *Social Work Themes, Issues and Critical Debates*. London: MacMillan.
- Agnew, R. (1992). Foundation for a General Strain Theory of Crime and Delinquency. *Criminology*, 30, 47-87.
- Ahmed, S. (1996). Beyond Humanism and Postmodernism: Theorising a Feminist Practice. *Hypatia*, 11, (2), 71-94.
- Aikman, H. (1981). *Victims of our Institutions: The Children of Women Prisoners*. Research Paper for Family Law, Victoria University, Wellington.
- Alston, M., & Bowles W. (1998). *Research Methods for Social Workers. An Introduction to Methods*. Australia: Allen and Unwin.
- Andrews, D.A., & Bonta, J. (1994). *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing.
- Annual Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives (AJHR), New Zealand Government.

AJHR, (1861), Reports and Memoranda of the Judges of the Supreme Court of New Zealand D, No 2, A. 1868, Royal Commission on Prisons, pp10-11.

AJHR, (1878) Vol II, G-J, H30. The Gaols Committee Report.

AJHR, (1893), Vol III, HJ: 2. Prison's Department Report.

AJHR, (1899), Vol III, H-20, Prison's Department, Inspector's Report.

AJHR, (1915), Vol III, H-20, Prison's Department, Inspector's Report.

AJHR, (1919). Vol III, H-20, Prison's Department Report.

AJHR, (1923), Vol III, H-20, Prison's Department, Reports of Comptroller General and Inspector of Prisons.

AJHR, (1924), Vol III, H-20, Prison's Department, Reports of Comptroller General and Inspector of Prisons.

AJHR, (1960), H-20, Department of Justice and Prisons Report.

Archwamety T., & Katsiyannis, A (Eds.), (1988). Factors Related to Recidivism Among Delinquent Females at a State Correctional Facility. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 7, (1), 59-67

Argyris, C. & Schön, D. (1974). *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Aron, A., & Aron, E. (1994). *Statistics for Psychology*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Bagaric, M. (2000). Double Punishment and Punishing Character: The Unfairness of Prior Convictions. *Criminal Justice Ethics*, 19, (11), 10-19.

- Barnao, A. (1996) *Assisting a Future Generation: The Children of Imprisoned Women*. Thesis submitted as partial fulfilment of a Masters of Public Policy. Victoria University of Wellington.
- Beckerman, A. (1998). Charting a Course: Meeting the Challenge of Permanency Planning for Children with Incarcerated Mothers. *Child Welfare*, 77, (5), 513-530.
- Berman, H., Ford-Gilboe, M., & Campbell, J. C. (1998). Combining Stories and Numbers: A Methodologic Approach for a Critical Nursing Science. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 21, (1), 1-15.
- Bill, L. (1998). The Victimisation...and...Revictimisation of Female Offenders. *Corrections Today*, 60, (7), 106-111.
- Birecree, E., Leverette, M., Bloom J., & Williams, M. (1994). Diagnostic Efforts Regarding Women in Oregon's Prison System: A Preliminary Report. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 38, (3), 217-231.
- Blackwell, B. S. (2000). Perceived Sanction Threats, Gender, and Crime: A Test and Elaboration of Power-Control Theory. *Criminology*, 38, (2), 439-488.
- Bonta, J., & Motiuk, L. L. (1985). Utilisation of an Interview-based Classification Instrument: A Study of Correctional Halfway Houses. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*, 12, 333-352.
- Bonta, J., Pang, B., & Wallace-Capretta, S. (1995). Predictors of Recidivism Among Incarcerated Female Offenders. *Prison Journal*, 75 (3), 277-294.
- Box, S. (1987). *Recession, Crime and Punishment*, London: Macmillan.
- Brannigan, A. (1997). Self Control, Social Control and Evolutionary Psychology: Towards an Integrated Perspective on Crime. *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, 39, (4), 404-431.
- Braybrooke, B., & O'Neill, R. (1988). *A Census of Prison Inmates: Policy and Research Division*, Department of Justice, Wellington, New Zealand.

Briar, C., Munford, R., & Nash, M., (Eds.), (1992). *Superwoman Where Are You?* Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press.

Britton, D. M. (2000). Feminism in Criminology, Engendering the Outlaw. *Annals of the American Academy of Social Sciences*, 571, 57-75.

Broidy, L., & Agnew, R. (1997). Gender and Crime: A General Strain Theory Perspective. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 34, (3), 275-327.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Brook, D. W. (2003). Drug Use and the Risk of Major Depressive Disorder, Alcohol Dependence, and Substance Use Disorders. *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 289, (8), 968.

Brzuzy, S., Ault, A. & Segal, E. A. (1997). Conducting Qualitative Interviews With Women Survivors of Trauma. *Affilia*, 12, (1), 76-83.

Bungay, R. (1998). *Scarecrows: Why Women Kill*. Auckland, New Zealand: Random House.

Campbell, L., & Marra, B. (2001). History and Practice of Probation in Aotearoa New Zealand. In M. Connolly, (Ed.), *New Zealand Social Work, Contexts and Practice*, 206-220. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Campbell, R., & Wasco, S. M. (2000). Feminist Approaches to Social Science: Epistemological and Methodological Tenets. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 28, (6), 773-791.

Carlen, P. (1983). *Women's Imprisonment: A Study of Social Control*. London: Routledge Kegan Paul.

Carlen, P. (1988). *Women, Crime and Poverty*. Milton Keynes, Open University Press.

Carlen, P. (1990). *Alternatives to Women's Imprisonment*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Carlen, P. (1998). *Sledgehammer: Women's Imprisonment at the Millenium*, Hampshire, UK: Macmillan Press.

Carlen, P., Christina, D., Hicks, J., O'Dwyer, J., & Tchaikovsky, C. (1985). *Criminal Women*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Carlen, P., & Worrall, A. (Eds.), (1987). *Gender, Crime and Justice*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Carlen, P., & Tchaikovsky C. (1996). Women's imprisonment in England at the end of the twentieth century: legitimacy, realities and utopias. In R. Matthews, and P. Francis, (Eds.), *Prisons 2000 An International Perspective on the Current State and Future of Imprisonment* (pp. 201-218). US: St Martin Press.

Chaiklin, H. (1972). Integrating Correctional and Family Systems. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 42, (5), 784-791.

Chambon, A. S., Irving, A., & Epstein, L. (Eds.), (1999). *Reading Foucault for Social Work*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Chesney-Lind, M. (1986). Women and Crime: The Female Offender. *Signs*, 12, 78-96.

Chesney-Lind, M. (1989). Girls' Crime and Women's Place: Toward a Feminist Model of Female Delinquency. *Crime and Delinquency*, 35, 5-30.

Chesney-Lind, M. (1993). *The Female Offender*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications

Chesney-Lind, M. (1997). *The Female Offender, Girls, Women and Crime*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Cheyne, C., O'Brien, M., & Belgrave, M. (1997). *Social Policy in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Chihlu, A., (1998). Bridging Positivist and Interpretivist Approaches to Qualitative Methods. *Policy Studies Journal*, 26, 162-181.

Christensen, D. H., & Dahl, C. M. (1997). Rethinking Research Dichotomies. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 25, (3), 269-286.

Clark, I. (1990). Invisible Women: Towards a Geography of Female Offending. A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Geography in the University of Canterbury.

Clear, T. (1994). *Harm in American Penology*. New York: State University of New York (SUNY) Press.

Clements, C. (1996). Offender Classification, Two Decades of Progress. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*, 23,(1),121-143.

Cohen, A. (1955). *Delinquent Boys*. New York: Free Press.

Collins, P. H. (1989). The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought, *Signs*, 14, 745-773.

Collins, P. H., (1991). Learning From the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought. In , M. M. Fonow, & J. A. Cook, (Eds.), *Beyond Methodology, Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research*. (pp. 35-59). United States: Indiana University Press.

Connolly, M. (Ed.), (2001). *New Zealand Social Work*. New Zealand: Oxford University Press.

Corbett, R. P., & Petersilia, J. (1994). A Review of Research for Practitioners. The Precursors of Criminal Offending Across the Life Course. *Federal Probation*, 58, (3). 51-57.

Cosgrove, L., & McHugh, M. (2000). Speaking for Ourselves: Feminist Methods and Community Psychology. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 28, (6), 815-838

Coulson, G., Ilacqua, G., Nutbrown, V., Guilekes, D., & Cudjoe, F. (1996). Predictive Utility of the LSI for Incarcerated Female Offenders. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*, 23, September, 427-439.

Creswell, J. W. (1994). *Research Design, Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). (2nd ed.). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Method Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W., Fetters, M. D. & Ivankova, N. V. (2004). Designing a Mixed Methods Study in Primary Care. *Annals of Family Medicine*, 2, (1), 7-18.

Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark, V. L., Guttman, M., Hanson, W. (2003). Advanced Mixed Methods Research Designs, In A. Tashakkori, & C. Teddlie, (Eds.), *Handbook on Mixed Methods in the Behavioural and Social Sciences*. (pp. 209-240). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Crowley, H., & Himmelweit, S. (Eds.), (1992). *Knowing Women: Feminism and Knowledge*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Cullen, F., & Gilbert K. (1982). *Reaffirming Rehabilitation*, Cincinnati, Ohio: Anderson Publications.

Curtis R., & Schulman, S. (1984). Ex-offenders, Family Relations, and Economic Supports: The "Significant Women" Study of the TARP Project. *Crime and Delinquency*, 30, (4), 507-528.

Dallimore, E. J. (2000). A Feminist Response to Issues of Validity in Research. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 23, (2), 157-181.

Dalley, B. (1991). Women's Imprisonment in New Zealand, 1880-1920. Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of History at the University of Otago, Dunedin.

Dalley, B. (1993). Prisons Without Men: The Development of a Separate Women's Prison in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of History*, 27, (1), 37-60.

Davison, G. C., Neale, J. M., & Kring, A. M. (2004). *Abnormal Psychology*. (Ninth ed.). US: John Wiley & Sons.

Dean H., & Melrose, M. (1995). *Manageable Discord*, UK: University of Luton.

Debats, D. L., Drost, J., & Hanson, P. (1995). Experiences of Meaning in Life: A Combined Qualitative and Quantitative Approach. *British Journal of Psychology*, 86, 359-375.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Denzin, N. K. (1994). The Art and Politics of Interpretation in N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln, (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (pp. 500-516). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Department of Corrections, New Zealand. (1999). *The National Study of Psychiatric Morbidity in New Zealand Prisons*. An Epidemiology Study commissioned by the Department of Corrections and co-sponsored by the Ministries of Health and Justice.

Department of Corrections, New Zealand, Prison Census, 2000a.

Department of Corrections, New Zealand, (2001) *Better Corrections Law, Summary of Submissions on Better Corrections Law for New Zealand*.

Department of Corrections, New Zealand. (1996). *Post Election Briefing Papers*, October.

Department of Corrections, New Zealand. (2000b). Community Probation Service, *Integrated Offender Management-An Explanation*.

Department of Corrections, New Zealand. (2001) Better Corrections Law. Summary of submissions on Better Corrections Law for New Zealand.

Department of Justice, New Zealand, (1981). *Penal Policy Review* report.

Department of Justice, New Zealand (1989). *Prison Review, Te Ara Hou, The New Way*, Ministerial Committee of Inquiry into the New Zealand Prisons System.

Department of Justice, New Zealand. (1968). *Crime In New Zealand*. New Zealand Government Printer.

Department of Justice, New Zealand. (1990) *Prisons in Change*, Submission of the Department of Justice to the Ministerial Review of the New Zealand Prisons System, (1989).

Dhaliwal, G., Porporino F., & Ross, R. (1994). Assessment of Criminogenic Factors, Programme Assignment, and Recidivism. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*, 24, (4), 454-467.

Diesing, P. (1992). *How Does Social Science Work? Reflections on Practice*. USA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Dietz, C. A. (2000). Reshaping Clinical Practice for the new Millenium. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 36, (3), 503-520.

Dobash, R., Dobash R. E., & Gutteridge, S. (1986). *The Imprisonment of Women*. UK: Basil Blackwell.

Dominelli, L., & McLeod, E. (1989). *Feminist Social Work*. London: Macmillan.

Dominelli, L. (1998). Anti-oppressive Practice in Context. In R., Adams, L. Dominelli, & M. Payne, (Eds.), *Social Work Themes, Issues and Critical Debates*. (pp. 3-22). London: Macmillan.

Downes, D. & Rock, P. (Eds.). (1988). *Understanding Deviance*. (2nd ed.). Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press.

- Du Bois, B. (1983). *Passionate Scholarship*. In G. Bowles, & R. Duelli Klein, (Eds.). *Theories of Women's Studies*. London: Routledge Kegan & Paul.
- Dunstall, K. (2000). Howard League for Penal Reform, New Zealand, *Newsletter 12*, September.
- Durkheim, E. (1951). *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*. London: Routledge. (Original work published, 1897).
- Edens, J. F., Hart, S. D., Johnson, D. W., Johnson, J. K., Olver, M. E. (2000). Use of the Personality Assessment Inventory to Assess Psychopathy in Offender Populations. *Psychological Assessment*, 12, (2), 132-139.
- Edwards, S. (1984). *Women on Trial: A Study of the Female Suspect, Defendant, and Offender in the Criminal Law and Criminal Justice System*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Epstein, B. (1999). Why Postmodernism is not Progressive: if you Seek Understanding or Social Change, Don't go There. *Free Inquiry*, 19, (2), 43-48.
- Eskridge C., & Newbold, G. (1993). Corrections in New Zealand. *Federal Probation*, 57, (3), 59-66.
- Everitt, B. S. (1996). *Making Sense of Statistics in Psychology*. UK: Oxford University Press.
- Farrington, D. P. (1986). Age and Crime. In M. Tonry, & N. Morris, (Eds.), *Crime and Justice*, (PP. 189-250), Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Farrington, D., Gallagher, B., Morley, L., St Ledger, R., & West, D. (1988). Are There Any Successful Men from Criminogenic Backgrounds? *Psychiatry*, 51, 116-130.
- Farrington, D.P., Ohlin L. E., & Wilson J. Q. (1986). *Understanding and Controlling Crime*. New York: Springer-Verlag.

Feeley, M., & Simon, J. (1992). The New Penology: Notes on the Emerging Strategy of Corrections and its Implications, *Criminology*, 30, 449-474.

Fejes-Mendoza, K., Miller D., & Eppler, R. (1995). Portraits of Dysfunction: Criminal, Educational and Family Profiles of Juvenile Female Offenders. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 18, (3): 309-321.

Ferguson, D., Horwood, L. J., & Lyndskey, M. T., (1994). The Childhoods of Multiple Problem Adolescents: A 15 Year Longitudinal Study. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 35, 1123-1140.

Flanagan, L. (1995). Meeting the Special Needs of Females in Custody: Maryland's Unique Approach. *Federal Probation*, 59, (2), 49-53.

Fonow, M. M., & Cook, J. A. (Eds.), (1991). *Beyond Methodology, Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research*. USA: Indiana University Press.

Fook J. (1996). *The Reflective Researcher*. UK: Allen and Unwin.

Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and Punish, The Birth of the Prison*. US: Vintage Books.

Franklin, C. (1996). Learning to Teach Qualitative Research: Reflections of a Quantitative Researcher. *Marriage and Family Review*, 24, (3-4), 241-274.

Friedan, B. (1963). *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: Norton.

Fulton B., & Stone, S. (1992). Evaluating the Effectiveness of Intensive Supervision. *Corrections Today*, 82, 84-87.

Gebremedhin, T., & Tweeten, L. (1994). *Research Methods and Communication in the Social Sciences*. USA: Kraeger.

Gelsthorpe L, and Morris A., (Eds.), (1990). *Feminist Perspectives in Criminology*. UK, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Genders, E., & Player, E. (1995). *Grendon: A Study of a Therapeutic Prison*. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press.

Gendreau, P. (1996). Offender Rehabilitation, What We Know and What Needs to be Done. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*, 23, (1), 144-161.

Gendreau, P., & Ross R. (1979). Effective Correctional Treatment: Bibliography for Cynics. *Crime and Delinquency*, 25, 463-489.

Gendreau, P., Goggin C., & Paparozzi, M. (1996). Principles of Effective Assessment for Community Corrections. *Federal Probation*, September: 64-70.

Gendreau P., Cullen F., & Bonta J. (1994). Intensive Rehabilitation Supervision: The Next Generation in Community Corrections? *Federal Probation*, 58, (1), 72- 78.

Gergen, K. J., & Gergen, M. M. (1991). Toward Reflexive Methodologies. In F. Steier (Ed.), *Research and Reflexivity*. (pp. 76-95). Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications

Germain, C. (1981). The Ecological Approach to People-Environment Transactions. *Social Casework*. 62, (6), 323-331.

Germain, C. B. & Gitterman, A. (1996). *The Life Model of Social Work Practice*. (2nd ed.), New York: Columbia University Press.

Gilfus, M. E. (1992). From Victim to Survivors to Offenders; Women's Routes of Entry and Immersion into Street Crime. *Women and Criminal Justice*, 4, 63- 89.

Giordano, P., Cernkovich, S., Rudolph, J. (2002). Gender, Crime, and Desistance: Toward a Theory of Cognitive Transformation. *American Journal of Sociology*, 107, 990-1064.

- Glaser, D. (1964). *The Effectiveness of a Prison and Parole System*. New York: Bobb-Merill
- Glaser, D. (1975). Achieving Better Questions: A Half Century's Progress in Correctional Research. *Federal Probation*, 39, 3-9.
- Glueck, S., & Glueck, E. (1964). *Ventures in Criminology: Selected Recent Papers*. London, Tavistock.
- Goffman, E. (1968). *Stigma*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.
- Gottfredson, M. R., & Hirschi, T. (1990). *A General Theory of Crime*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Greenberg, D. (1981). *Crime and Capitalism*. New York University: Mayfield House.
- Greenberg, D. (Ed.), (1993). *Crime and Capitalism: Readings in Marxist Criminology*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press,
- Greer, G. (1970). *The Female Eunuch*. UK: Penguin.
- Grinnell, R., & Williams M. (1990). *Research in Social Work: A Primer*. USA: Peacock.
- Guba, E. G. (1990). The Alternative Paradigm. In Guba, E. G. *The Paradigm Dialogue*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994) Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln. (pp. 105-117). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Hagan, J. (1984). *The Disreputable Pleasures*, (2nd ed.). Canada: McGraw-Hill.
- Hagan, J., & Foster, H. (2003). S/He's a Rebel: Toward a Sequential Stress Theory of Delinquency and Gendered Pathways to Disadvantage in Emerging Adulthood. *Social Forces*, 82, (1), 53-87.

Hairston, D. F. (1991). Family Ties During Imprisonment: Important for Whom and for What? *Journal of Sociology and Welfare*, 18, (1), 87-104.

Hall, G. G. (1994). *Sentencing Guide*. Wellington, New Zealand: Butterworths.

Hannon, L., & DeFronzo, J. (1998). Welfare and Property Crime. *Justice Quarterly*, 15, (2), 273-287.

Harding, S. (1986). *The Science Question in Feminism*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

Harding, S. (1987). *Feminism and Methodology*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Harding, S. (1991). *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

Harding, S. (1992). The Instability of the Analytical Categories of Feminist Theory. In H. Crowley, & S. Himmelweit, (Eds.), *Knowing Women: Feminism and Knowledge*. (pp. 338-354). Cambridge, England: Polity Press in association with the Open University Press.

Hartsock, N. M. (1997). *The Feminist Standpoint Revisited and Other Essays*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Hawke, G. R., & Robinson, D. (1993). *Performance Without Profit: the Voluntary Sector in New Zealand*. Victoria Institute of Policy Studies, Victoria University of Wellington.

Heidensohn, F. (1985). *Women and Crime*. UK: Macmillan.

Hill, J., Bond, M. A., Mulvey, A., & Terenzio, M. (2000). Methodological Issues and Challenges for a Feminist Community Psychology: An Introduction to a Special Issue. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 28, (6), 759-773.

- Hilton, N. Z., Harris, G. T., Rice, M. E., Lang, C., Cormier, C. A., Lines, K. J. (2004). A Brief Actuarial Assessment for the Prediction of Wife Assault Recidivism: The Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment. *Psychological Assessment*, 16, (3), 267-275.
- Hirschi, T. (1969). *Causes of Delinquency*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hocken, T. J. (1898). *Contributions to the Early History of New Zealand*. London: Simpson, Low, Marston & Co.
- Hoffman, J. P. (2003). A Contextual Analysis of Differential Association, Social Control, and Strain Theories of Delinquency. *Social Forces*, 81, (3), 753-786.
- Hollin, C. R. (1992). *Criminal Behaviour*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Hood, S., Mayall, B., & Oliver, S. (Eds.). (1999). *Critical Issues In Social Research*, London: Open University Press.
- Horn, J. (1998). Qualitative Research Literature: A Bibliographic Essay. *Library Trends*, 46, (4), 602-616.
- Huberman, A. M, & Miles, M. B. (1994). Data Management and Analysis Methods. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln, (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. (pp. 428- 444). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications
- Hudson, B. (1996). *Understanding Justice, An Introduction to Ideas, Perspectives and Controversies in Modern Penal Theory*. UK: Open University Press.
- Hughes, J. (1999). Battered Woman's Syndrome and "Interdependence" as Factors in Establishing Conjugal Status in Social Security Law, *Waikato Law Review*, 7, 105-146.
- Hughes J. (1990). *The Philosophy of Social Research*, UK: Longman.
- Immarageon, R. (1995). What Works. *Corrections Today*, 57, (7), S1-8.

Jackson, M. (1988). *The Maori and the Criminal Justice System, He Whapainga Hou, A New Perspective*. Study Series 18., Policy and Research Division, Department of Justice, Wellington.

Jayarathne, T. E., & Stewart, A. J. (1991). Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in the Social Sciences: Current Feminist Issues and Practical Strategies. In M. M. Fonow, & J. A. Cook, *Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research*. (pp. 85-106). Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Jones, M & Sims B. (1997). Recidivism of Offenders Released from Prison in North Carolina a Gender Comparison. *Prison Journal*, 77, (3), 335-48.

Jurik, N. (1983). The Economics of Female Recidivism. *Criminology*, 21, (4), 603-622.

Katz, R. S. (2000). Explaining Girls' and Women's Crime and Desistance in the Context of Their Victimization Experiences. *Violence Against Women*, 6, (6), 633-660.

Kennedy H. (1993). *Eve Was Framed. Women and British Justice*. UK: Vintage.

Kingi, V. (1996). Mothers in Prison. *Journal of NZ Association of Probation Officers*, New Zealand.

Kingi, V. (1999). *Children of Women in Prison*. A Thesis submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Criminology.

Kroner, D. G., & Loza, W. (2001). Evidence for the Efficacy of Self-report in Predicting Nonviolent and Violent Criminal Recidivism. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 16, (2), 168-177.

Larzelere, R.E., & Patterson, G.R. (1990). Parental Management: Mediator of the Effect of Socioeconomic Status on Early Delinquency. *Criminology*, 28, 301- 323.

Lash, B. (1995). Census of Prison Inmates. Ministry of Justice, Wellington.

Lashlie, C., & Pivac, K. (2000). *He Kete Pokai, Suitcase of Hope*, A Working Document on the Management of Women in Prison in New Zealand, Department of Corrections, Wellington, New Zealand.

Laub, J. H., & Sampson, R. J. (1993). Turning Points in the Life Course: Why Change Matters to the Study of Crime. *Criminology*, 31, (3), 301-325.

Leibrich, J. (1994). What Do Offenders Say About Supervision and Going Straight? *Federal Probation*, 58, (2), 41-46.

Leibrich J., (1993). *Straight to the Point: Angles on Giving up Crime*, Wellington, New Zealand: Department of Justice and Otago University Press.

Leonard, P. (1997). *Postmodern Welfare: Reconstructing an Emancipatory Project*. UK: Thousand Oaks, California, Sage Publications.

Lewis, M. W., & Grimes, A. J. (1999). Metatriangulation: Building Theory from Multiple Paradigms. *Academy of Management Review*, 24, (4), 672-692.

Leonard, L., & Leonard, P., (1999). Women on the Margins. *Canadian Social Work Review*, 16, (1), 5-17.

Lilburn, S. (2001). Arresting Moments: Identifying Risks for Women and their Children from the Time of Police Arrest. *Alternative Law Journal*, 26, (3), 115-119.

Locher, B., & Prugl, E. (2001). Feminism and Constructivism: Worlds Apart or Sharing the Middle Ground? *International Studies Quarterly*, 45, 111-129.

Locke, E. (1978). *The Gaoler*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press.

Loeber, R., & Le Blanc, M. (1990). "Toward a Developmental Criminology". In *Crime and Justice*. M. Tonry & N. Morris (Eds.). Vol. 12. Chicago: University of Chicago Press., pp. 375-473.

- Loeber, R., & Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1986). Family Factors as Correlates and Predictors of Juvenile Conduct Problems and Delinquency. In M. Tonry, & N. Morris, (Eds.). *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review* (Vol. 7, pp29-151). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lombroso, C., & Ferrero, W. (1895). *The Female Offender*. London: T. Fisher, Unwin.
- Loucks, A. & Zamble, E. (1994). Some Comparisons of Female and Male Serious Offenders. *Forum on Corrections Research*, 6, (1), 22-25.
- Loucks, A. & Zamble, E. (1999). Predictors of Recidivism in Serious Female Offenders: Canada Searches for Predictors Common to Both Men and Women. *Corrections Today*, 61, (1), 26-31.
- Louth, S. M., Hare, R. D., Linden, W. (1998). Psychopathy and Alexithymia in Female Offenders. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Sciences*, 30, (2), 91-98.
- McClellan, D. S., Farabee, D., & Crouch, B. M. (1997). Early Victimization, Drug Use, and Criminality: A Comparison of Male and Female Prisoners. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*. 24, (4), 455-476.
- McClure, M., (1998). *A Civilised Community*, Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press.
- McDonald, C. (1977). Women and Crime in New Zealand Society, 1888-1910. A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of Master of Arts Degree, Massey University.
- McDonald, D. (1998). *Social Work in Aotearoa New Zealand, An Introduction*. New Zealand: Addison, Wesley, Longman.
- McHugh, M. C., & Cosgrove, L. (2000). Speaking for Ourselves: Feminist Methods and Community Psychology. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 28, (6), 815-838.
- McQuaide S., & Ehrenreich J. (1998). Women in Prison: Approaches to Understanding the Lives of a Forgotten Population. *Affilia*, 13, (2), 233-246.

- McLaren, K. (1992). *Reducing Reoffending: What Works Now*. Wellington, New Zealand: Department of Justice.
- McLaren, K. (1996). *Dazed and Confused: New Evidence on What Works in Reducing Reoffending*. Presentation to the Criminology Conference, Victoria University, Wellington, 1996.
- Maden, A., Swinton, M., & Gunn, J. (1994). A Criminological and Psychiatric Survey of Women Serving a Prison Sentence. *British Journal of Criminology*, 34, (2), 172- 191.
- Maden A. (1997). Are Women Different? *International Journal of Psychiatry*, 9, 243- 248.
- Madill, A., Jordan, A., & Shirley, C. (2000). Objectivity and Reliability in Qualitative Analysis in Realist, Contextualist and Radical Constructionist Epistemologies. *British Journal of Psychology*, 91, 1-20.
- Mann, S. A., & Kelley, L. R. (1997). Standing at the Crossroads of Modernist Thought: Collins, Smith and the new Feminist Epistemologies. *Gender and Society*, 11, (4), 391-409.
- Mannheim, H. (Ed.), (1960). *Pioneers in Criminology*. London: Stevens & Son.
- Manning, A.E. (1958). *The Bodgie, A Study in Abnormal Psychology*. Wellington, New Zealand: A.H. and A. W. Reed.
- Mantilla, K. (1999). Let Them Eat Text: The Real Politics of Postmodernism. *Off Our Backs*, 29, (18), 7-10.
- Marcus, G. E. (1994). What Comes (Just) After "Post"? The Case of Ethnography in N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln, (Eds.). (pp 563-574). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. California: Sage.
- Marlatt, A., & Gordon, J. (1985). *Relapse Prevention*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Martinson, R. (1976). California Research at the Crossroads. *Crime and Delinquency*, 22, 180-91.

- Massat, C. R., & Lundy, M. (1997). Empowering Research Participants. *Affilia*, 12, (1), 33-56.
- Mattinson, M. (2000). Ethical Decision Making: The Person in the Process. *Social work*, 45, (3), 201-212.
- Mayer, J. E., & Timms, N. (1970). *The Client Speaks*. UK, Routledge Kegan Paul.
- Mednick, S. A., Gabrielli, W. F., & Hutchings, B. (1984). Genetic Influences in Criminal Convictions: Evidence from an Adoption Court. *Science*, 224, 891-895.
- Merton, R. K. (1957). *Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York: The Free Press.
- Meyer, C. H., & Mattaini, M. A. (Eds.), (1995). *The Foundations of Social Work Practice*. Washington: NASW Press.
- Mies, M. (1991). Women's Research or Feminist Research? The Debate Surrounding Feminist Science and Methodology. In M. M. Fonow, & J. A. Cook, (Eds.), *Beyond Methodology, Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research*. (pp. 60-84), Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, M. A. (1995). *Qualitative Data Analysis: an Expanded Sourcebook*, (2nd ed), California, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Miller D., Trapani, C., Fejes-Mendoza, K., Eggleston, C., & Dwiggins, D. (1995). Adolescent Female Offenders: Unique Considerations. *Adolescence*, 30, (118), 429-435.
- Ministry of Justice, New Zealand, (1996). Briefing Paper for Minister of Justice. October, Wellington.
- Ministry of Justice, New Zealand, (1999). Briefing Paper for Minister of Justice, Wellington.
- Ministry of Justice, New Zealand, *Prison Censuses*, 1991, 1995, 1997.

- Moffitt, T. E. (1993). Adolescence Limited and Life Course Persistent Antisocial Behaviour: A Developmental Taxonomy. *Psychological Review*, 100, 674-701.
- Monroe, S. M., & Simons, A. D. (1991). Diathesis-stress Theories in the Context of Life Stress Research: Implications for the Depressive Disorders. *Psychological Bulletin*, 110, 406-425.
- Morawski, J. (1997). The Science Behind Feminist Research Methods. *Journal of Social Issues*, 53, (4), 667-682.
- Morris, A. (1987). *Women, Crime and Criminal Justice*. UK: Basil, Blackwell, Ltd.
- Morris, N., and Rothman, D., (Eds.) (1995). *The Oxford History of the Prison*. UK, Oxford University Press.
- Morton, J. (1996). Effective Initiatives: What Works With Women Offenders? *The State of Corrections*, 235-243.
- Moth, B. & Hudson, S. (1999). *An Investigation into the Demographic and Offence-Specific Variables, Need Areas and Security Classification in Incarcerated Female Offenders in New Zealand*, Department of Corrections, Wellington, New Zealand.
- Motiuk, L. (1997). Classification for Correctional Programming: The Offender Intake Assessment (OIA). *Forum on Corrections Research*, 9 (1), 18-22.
- Motiuk, M., Motiuk, L., & Bonta, J. (1992). A Comparison Between Self-Report and Interview-based Inventories in Offender Classification. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*, 19, (2), 143-159.
- Munford, R., & Nash. M. (Eds.), (1994). *Social Work in Action*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press.
- Naffine, N. (1997). *Feminism and Criminology*, Australia: Allen and Unwin.
- New Zealand Crimes Act, 1961.

New Zealand Criminal Justice Act ,1985 and 1993 Amendments.

New Zealand Social Security Act (1964).

New Zealand Law Commission, (2001). Report 73. *Some Criminal Defences with Particular Reference to Battered Women Defendants*. Wellington, New Zealand.

Newbold, G. (1992). *Crime and Deviance*. Critical Issues in New Zealand Series. UK: Oxford University Press.

Oakley, A. (1999). People's ways of knowing: gender and methodology. In S. Hood, B. Mayall, & S. Oliver, (Eds.), *Critical Issues in Social Research*. (pp. 154-170). UK: Open University Press.

O'Brien, P. (2001a). "Just Like Baking A Cake": Women Describe the Necessary Ingredients for Successful Reentry After Incarceration. *Families in Society*, 82, (3), 287-295.

O'Brien, P. (2001b). *Making It in the Free World*. New York: New York State University Press.

O'Connell, D. J. (2003). Investigating Latent Trait and Life Course Theories as Predictors of Recidivism Among and Offender Sample. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 31, 455-467.

O'Connor, I, Wilson, J.,& Setterlund, D. (1998). *Social Work & Welfare and Practice*, (3rd ed.). Australia: Addison, Wesley Longman.

O'Neill, R. (1989). The Experience of Imprisonment for Women: A New Zealand Study, Thesis submitted as partial fulfilment for degree of Master in Social Science, University of Waikato, New Zealand.

Olesen, V. (1994). Feminisms and Models of Qualitative Research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln, (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (pp. 158-174), Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Orb, A., Eisenhauer, L., Wynaden, D. (2001). *Ethics in Qualitative Research*. Journal of Nursing Scholarship, 33, (1), 93

Padel U., and Stevenson P. (1988). *Insiders, Women's Experience of Prison*. UK: Virago Press.

Page, R. (1984). *Stigma*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Pallone, N. J., Eskridge, C., Newbold, G. (1996). Global Perspectives: Crime, Justice, Corrections. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 24, (1/2).

Palmer, T. (1991). The Effectiveness of Intervention: Recent Trends and Current Issues. *Crime and Delinquency*, 37, (3): 330-346.

Palmer, T. (1992). Growth Centred Intervention: An Overview of Changes in Recent Decades, *Federal Probation*, 56, (1), 62-67.

Palmer T. (1995). Programmatic and Nonprogrammatic Aspects of Successful Intervention: New Directions for Research. *Crime and Delinquency*, 41, (1), 100-131.

Palmer, T. (1994). *A Profile of Correctional Effectiveness and New Directions for Research*. New York: State University of New York.

Paternoster, R., & Brame, R. (1997). Multiple Routes to Delinquency? A Test of Developmental and General Theories of Crime. *Criminology*, 35, (1), 49-84.

Paulus, P., & Dzindolet, M. (1993). Reactions of Male and Female Inmates to Prison Confinement, Further Evidence for a Two-Component Model. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*, 20, (2), 149-166.

Pearl, N. R. (1998). Use of Community Based Social Services to Reduce Recidivism in Female Parolees. *Women and Criminal Justice*. 10, (1), 27-54.

Peter, T., LaGrange, C., & Silverman, R. A. (2003). Investigating the Interdependence of Strain and Self-Control, *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 45, (4), 431-465.

Pilger, J. (1998). *Hidden Agendas*. London: Vintage.

Player E., & Jenkins, M., (Eds.), (1994). *Prisons After Woolf*. UK: Routledge.

Pollak, O. (1950). *The Criminality of Women*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Pratt, J. (1992). *Punishment in a Perfect Society. The New Zealand Penal System 1840-1939*. Wellington, New Zealand: Victoria University Press.

Pratt, J. (1995). Dangerousness, Risk and Technologies of Power, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 28, 3-31.

Quadrelli, C. (1997). Women In Prison, Where are we Going? *Themis, the Journal for Justice Professionals*, 2, (2), 15-22.

Rabinowitz, V. C., & Weseen, S. (1997). Elucidating Epistemological Impasses: Re-viewing the Qualitative/Quantitative Debates in Psychology. *Journal of Social Issues*, 53, (4), 605-631.

Rafter, N. H. (1990). *Partial Justice: Women, Prisons and Social Control*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

Reamer, F. (1995). *Social Work Values and Ethics*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist Methods in Social Research*. UK: Oxford University Press.

Rice, G. W. (Ed.) (1991). *The Oxford History of New Zealand*. Auckland, New Zealand: Oxford University Press.

Richards, J. J. & Richards, L. (1994) Using Computers in Qualitative Research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln, (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. (pp. 445-462). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Rice, M. E., & Harris, G. T. (1995). Violent Recidivism: Assessing Predictive Validity. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 63, (5), 737-748.

Riley, D. (1998). *A Needs-Risk Profile of New Zealand Offenders*. Report Prepared for the Integrated Offender Management project, February. Psychological Services, Department of Corrections, New Zealand.

Robinson, J. (1983). Of Diverse Persons, Men and Women and Whores: Women and Crime in Nineteenth Century Canterbury. Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of a Master of Arts Degree (Sociology), University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

Russell, B. (1972). *A History of Western Philosophy*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Sampson, R. J., & Laub, J. H. (1995). *Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points Through Life*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press,

Saphira, M. (1981) *Children in Prison: An Alternative to Incarceration With Separation*, Department of Justice, New Zealand, Internal Paper.

Sarbin, T. R., & Kitsuse J. L. (1994). *Constructing the Social*. UK: Sage Publications.

Schafer, N. E. (1994). Exploring the Links Between Visits and Parole Success: A Survey Of Prison Visitors. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 38, (1), 17-32.

Schwandt, T. A. (1994). Constructivist, Interpretive Approaches to Human Inquiry. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln, (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. (pp. 118-137). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Shaw, M. (1996). Is there a Feminist Future for Women's Prisons? In R. Matthews, & P. Francis (Eds.), *Prisons 2000: An International Perspective on the Current State and Future of Imprisonment*. US: St Martin Press.

Simon, R.J. (1975). *Women and Crime*. Lexington, D.C.:Heath and Co.

- Sims, J. (1992). Women's Prison: Their Social and Cultural Environment. *Federal Prison Journal*, Spring, 44-48.
- Skinstad, H., & Swain, A. (2001). Comorbidity in a Clinical Sample of Substance Abusers. *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, 27, (1), 45-65.
- Small, S. A. (1995). Action-Oriented Research: Models and Methods, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 57, (4), 941-65.
- Smart, C. (1977). *Women, Crime and Criminology. A Feminist Critique*. London: Routledge, Kegan Paul.
- Smart, C. (1990). Feminist Approaches to Criminology or Postmodern Woman Meets Atavistic Man, in L. Gelsthorpe, & A. Morris, (Eds.), *Feminist Perspectives in Criminology*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Smith D. (1995). *Criminology for Social Work*. UK: McMillan.
- Stanley, L., & Wise, S. (1983). Back into 'the personal': or our attempt to construct 'feminist research'. In G. Bowles, & R. Duelli Klein, (Eds.), *Theories of Women's Studies*. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Stats Soft Inc. (Computer Software). (1994). Tulsa: OK.
- Steier, F. (Ed.). (1991). *Research and Reflexivity*. UK. Sage Publications.
- Sutch, W.B. (1973). *Women With A Cause*. Wellington: New Zealand University Press.
- Sutherland, E. H., & Cressey, D. R. (1970). *Criminology*. Philadelphia: Lippincott.
- Taylor, A. (1996). The Imprisonment of Women in New Zealand, 1840 to the Present Day. Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of a Master of Social Work degree, Massey University.

- Taylor, A. (1998). *Social Work in New Zealand Prisons*, Research Report 4, Department of Social Work, University of Canterbury.
- Te Puni Kokiri. (1999). *Closing the Gaps*. Wellington: New Zealand Government.
- Teeters, N. (1995). Fundamentals of Crime Prevention. *Federal Probation*, 59, (3), 63-68.
- Tennant, M. (1989). *Paupers and Providers*. New Zealand: Allen and Unwin.
- Thornberry, P. T. (Ed.). (1997). *Developmental Theories of Crime and Delinquency*. New Brunswick and London, UK: Transaction Publishers.
- Toch, H. (1995). Case Managing Multiproblem Offenders. *Federal Probation*, 59, (4), 41-47.
- Torrance, J. A. (1877). Memories of _____. Dunedin: New Zealand Bible Society.
- Truell, R. & Nowland, L. (Eds.), (2002). *Reflections on Current Social Work Practice*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press.
- Turner S., Petersilia J., & Deschenes E. (1992). Evaluating Intensive Supervision, Probation/Parole (ISP) for Drug Offenders. *Crime and Delinquency*, 38, 4, 539-556.
- Ungar, M. (2002). A Deeper, More Ecological Social Work Practice. *Social Service Review*, 76, (3), 480-499.
- Van Voorhis, P. (1994). *Psychological Classification of the Adult Male Prison Inmate*. New York: Albany State University of New York Press.
- Vasquez, M. J. T. (2001). 1999 Division 35 Presidential Address: Leveling the Playing Field-Toward the Emancipation of Women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 25, 89-97.
- Walters, G. (1991). The Lifestyle Criminality Screening Form, Preliminary Data. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*, 18, (4), 406-418.

- Walters, G. (1995). The Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*, 24, (3), 307-325.
- Walters, G. (1997). A Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Lifestyle Criminality Screening Form. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*, 24, (2), 294-308.
- Warnke, G., (1993). Feminism and Hermeneutics. *Hypatia*, 8, (1), 81-99.
- Warr, M. (1998). Life-Course Transitions and Desistance from Crime. *Criminology*, 36, (2), 183-215.
- White, R., and Haines, F. (1996). *Crime and Criminology*. US: Oxford University Press.
- Widom, C. S. (1989). The Cycle of Violence. *Science*, 244, 160-166.
- Widom, C. S., & Ames, A. (1994). Criminal Consequences of Childhood Sexual Victimization. *Child Abuse and Neglect*. 18, 303-318.
- Wilson, P., & Braithwaite J. (Eds.). (1978) *Two Faces of Deviance: Crimes of the Powerless and the Powerful*. Queensland: University of Queensland Press.
- Wilkes, C., & Shirley, I. (Eds.) (1984). *In the Public Interest, Health, Work and Housing in New Zealand*, Auckland, New Zealand: Benton Ross.
- Williams, F. (1989). *Social Policy: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Witkin, S. (2000). Ethics-R-Us. *Social Work*, 45, (3), 197-200.
- Worrall, A. (1990). *Offending Women, Female Lawbreakers and the Criminal Justice System*. UK: Routledge.

Young, J. (1991). Left Realism and the Priorities of Crime Control. In K. Stenson, & D. Cowell, (Eds.), *The Politics of Crime Control*. London: Sage.

Zamble, G. & Quinsey, V. L. (1997). *The Criminal Recidivism Process*. UK: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge Criminology Series.

Zedner, Lucia. (1991). *Women, Crime and Custody in Victorian England*. Oxford Historical Monograph, UK: Clarendon Press.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Personal Communication with Minister of Corrections	344
Appendix 2a: Community Probation Risk Assessment	345
Appendix 2b: Community Probation Needs Assessment	347
Appendix 3: Interview Schedule	349
Appendix 4: The Interview Schedule and questions selected for Statistical analysis	372
Appendix 5: List of 47 variables derived from 83 with explanations for collapsing of Variables	375
Appendix 6a: Interview guide for participants	376
Appendix 6b: Letter to participants	377
Appendix 6c: Contact consent form for participants	378
Appendix 6d: Information sheet for participants	379
Appendix 6e: Participant consent form	381
Appendix 6f: Consent form for access to Probation files	382



Office of Hon Matt Robson

Minister of Corrections

Minister for Courts

Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control

Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade

17 APR 2000

Annabel Taylor
Bealey Road
Aylesbury
CHRISTCHURCH R.D.1

Dear Annabel

Thank you for your recent fax regarding my decision to keep the kitchen at Christchurch Women's Prison open.

As I indicated to the media I came to my decision after meeting with various parties involved and taking into consideration all the issues raised.

I believe it is important to keep the kitchen open as it offers the women inmates' an excellent opportunity to learn and develop important life skills and be trained in NZQA qualifications. I also believe that the skills the women learn in the prison kitchen will prove invaluable when they return to their families on release from prison.

Following up from your e-mail earlier in the year, I indicated I would like to meet with you to discuss your research into both external and internal factors, which may influence offending.

I am hoping to visit Christchurch on Wednesday 10 May and, if possible, would like to meet with you in the afternoon of the 10 May. I have asked my private secretary, Karyn McLean, to contact you directly to discuss whether this date would be suitable.

Thank you once again for your kind words.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Robson".

Matt Robson
Minister of Corrections

RISK ASSESSMENT SCALE

NAME:	PRN:	DOB:
SENTENCE/ORDER:	COURT/SENTENCING DATE:	
DATE OF ASSESSMENT:	PROBATION OFFICER:	
SERVICE CENTRE:		

Select the appropriate answer and enter the associated weight in the score column. Total all scores to arrive at the risk assessment score.

			Score
1. Number of Address Changes in Last 12 months: (Prior to incarceration for parolees)	0 None 2 One 3 Two or more		<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Percentage of Time Employed in Last 12 months: (Prior to incarceration for parolees)	0 Not applicable 0 60% or more 1 40% - 59% 2 Under 40%		<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Alcohol Usage Problems: (Prior to incarceration for parolees)	0 No interference with functioning 2 Occasional abuse or some disruption of functioning 4 Frequent use or serious disruption		<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Other Drug Usage Problems: (Prior to incarceration for parolees)	0 No interference with functioning 1 Occasional use or some disruption of functioning 2 Frequent abuse or serious disruption: needs treatment		<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Attitude	0 Motivated to change, receptive to assistance 3 Dependent or unwilling to accept responsibility 5 Rationalise behaviour negative not motivated to change		<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Age at First Conviction, Includes Findings of Guilt: (Adult or Childrens' Court)	0 24 or older 2 20 - 23 4 19 or younger		<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Number of Prior Community Correctional Orders: (Adult or Childrens' Court Excludes current offence)	0 None 4 One or More		<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Number of Breaches of Community Correctional Orders: (Adult or Childrens' Court Excludes fine default orders but note in comments)	0 None 4 One or more		<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Number of Prior Convictions Including Findings of Guilt for Indictable Offences: (Adult or Childrens' Court Excludes current offence)	0 None 2 One 4 Two or more		<input type="checkbox"/>

10. Convictions Includes Findings of Guilt of Adult/Child
for. (Select applicable and add for score. Do not exceed
a total of 5. Include current offence)
- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| 0 | None | |
| 2 | Burglary, theft, car theft or robbery | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | Worthless cheques or forgery/credit
cards/deception | |
| 5 | Convictions for 2 and 3 | |
11. Assaultive Offence Within the Last Two Years:
(An offence which involves the use of a weapon, physical
force or the threat of force including intimidation. When
assessing prisoners the two year period dates from prior
to their imprisonment. Include current offence)
- | | | |
|----|-----|--------------------------|
| 0 | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15 | Yes | |

Total

Risk Scale

Low Risk	0 to 7
Moderate Risk	8 to 14
High Risk	15 and over

Note: The maximum score without an assaultive offence is 37

General Comments on assessed Risk Score and Allocated Risk Level:

APPENDIX 2b: Community Probation Needs Assessment

347

ASSESSMENT OF OFFENDERS NEEDS

NAME:

DATE:

ASSAULT HISTORY: YES/NO

RISK SCORE

NEEDS SCORE

1. Academic/Vocational Skills

Score

- 1 High Educational/Vocational Skill Level
- 0 Adequate Skills able to handle everyday requirements
- +2 Low Skill Level causing minor problems
- +4 Minimal Skill Level causing serious problems

2. Employment

- 1 Satisfactory employment for one year or longer
- 0 Secure employment, no difficulties reports, or home duties student or retired
- +3 Unsatisfactory employment or unemployed but with adequate job skills
- +6 Unemployed and virtually unemployable

3. Financial Management

- 1 Long standing pattern of self sufficiency, eg good credit rating
- 0 No current difficulties
- +3 Situational or minor difficulty
- +6 Severe difficulties may include garnishment, bad cheques or bankruptcy

4. Marital/Family Relationships

- 1 Support exceptionally strong
- 0 Relatively stable relationship
- +3 Some dysfunction but potential for improvement
- +5 Major dysfunction

5. Companions

- 1 Good support and influence
- 0 No adverse relationships
- +3 Some dysfunction but potential for improvement
- +4 Associations almost completely negative

6. Emotional Stability

- 1 Exceptionally well adjusted, accepts responsibility for actions
- 0 No symptoms of instability or known psychiatric disorder, appropriate emotional responses
- +4 Emotional instability or psychiatric disorder, limits but doesn't reduce adequate functioning eg high anxiety
- +7 Emotional instability or psychiatric disorder, significantly reduces adequate functioning eg lashes out or retreats into self

7. Alcohol Usage

- 0 No interference with functioning
- +3 Occasional Abuse, some disruption
- +6 Frequent Abuse, serious disruption

8. Other Drug Use

- 0 No interference with functioning
+3 Occasional Abuse, some disruption
+6 Frequent Abuse, serious disruption

☐**9. Mental Ability**

- 0 Able to Function Independently
+3 Some need for assistance, potential for adequate adjustment
+6 Deficiencies severely limit independent functioning; moderate or significant intellectual impairment

☐**10. Health**

- 0 Serious physical health; seldom ill
+1 Disability or illness interferes with functioning but treatment is self managed
+2 Serious disability or chronic illness; needs frequent medical care, current alcoholism and or drug abuse

☐**11. CCO's Impression of Offenders Needs**

- 1 Minimum
0 Low
+3 Medium
+5 Maximum

☐

Please explain reasons for your impressions of offender's needs

TOTAL

Needs Scale

- | | |
|-------------|----------------|
| 8 to 14 | Low |
| 15 to 24 | Moderate Needs |
| 25 and Over | High Needs |

General Comments

APPENDIX 3: Participant Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES. FACTORS AFFECTING WOMEN'S REOFFENDING**Preamble:**

Self introduction will have been completed as part of informed consent to participate in the study.

Stress confidentiality at outset of interview to reinforce informed consent procedure.

The first two sets of questions in this interview are ones which you are likely to have been asked before now, either by Probation or by prison staff. The reason I need to ask them is to make sure that the questions are asked in the same way each time. There might be some women who haven't answered these before. One set will be about your risk of reoffending, the other will be about your release needs.

- 1) Risk Assessment Community Probation
- 2) Needs Assessment Community Probation.

Preamble: The next set of questions are about new things which haven't been asked before or they might extend some of the questions already asked. Some of them have been designed especially for women because of your particular situation.

- 1) Age..... 2) Employment.....
- 3) Current address.....

Income Support

- 4) Independent income. yes..... No.....M.....
- 5) Wages. Yes.....No.....
- 6) Benefit Yes..... No.....
- 7) Type of Benefit U/B..... DPB..... S/B.....
INV/B.....
- 8) Are you dependent on your partner's income? Yes..... No.....M.....
- 9) Wages.....Yes.....No.....
- 10) Benefit.....Yes.....No.....
- 11) Type of joint benefit U/B.....S.B.....INV/B.....

Education

12) Did you leave High School with an N.Z.Q.A qualification?.....Yes.....No.....
(e.g, School Certificate, 6th Form Cert, H.L.S or University Entrance)

13) Did you leave school in the 3rd or 4th form.....

14) Name your highest qualification.....

Preamble: The next set of questions is about your family background and where you came from. This is because where we come from may have a lot to do with how we are now.

Family of origin background.

15) Were your parents married or living together when you lived at home?
Yes.....No.....M.....

16) Parents Divorced or separated?.....Yes.....No.....M.....

17) Were you ever in a Single parent family?.....Yes.....No.....M.....

18) If yes, were you between 11 and 16 years old when they separated?.....Yes.....No.....M.....

19) Did you have any brothers or sisters? .Yes.....No.....M.....

20) If yes, how many of each?.....

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Circle to show respondent's birth order.

21) Have your parents been in trouble with the law? Yes..... No.....M.....

22) If yes, what kind of offending did they do?

Violent offending? Yes..... No.....M.....

Property offending? Yes..... No.....M.....

Drugs Yes..... No.....M.....

Fraud Yes..... No.....M.....

23) Were either of your parents in prison at some time in your life?

Yes..... No.....M.....

24) Have your brothers and/or sisters ever been in trouble? Yes.....

No.....M.....

25) If yes, what kind of offending did they do?

Violent offending Yes..... No.....M.....

Property offending? Yes..... No.....M.....

Drugs Yes..... No.....M.....

Fraud Yes..... No.....M.....

26) Have any of your brothers and/or sisters been inside?

Yes..... No.....M.....

Did you experience any of the following during your childhood?

- 27) Sexual abuse? Yes.....No.....M.....
- 28) Physical abuse? Yes.....No.....M.....
- 29) Witnessed physical or sexual abuse of a sibling
Yes.....No.....M.....
- 30) Witnessed physical or non-physical violence between your parents
Yes.....No.....M.....
- 31) Parents frequently drugged or drunk Yes.....No.....M.....
- 32) There was often not enough food in the house Yes.....No.....M.....
- 33) Your family was very poor Yes.....No.....M.....
- 34) Being placed in foster homes Yes.....No.....M.....
- 35) Being placed in children's homes Yes.....No.....M.....
- 36) Often in trouble with family Yes.....No.....M.....
- 37) History of running away from home Yes.....No.....M.....
- 38) Often left alone to look after yourself Yes.....No.....M.....
- 39) Frequent beatings or physical ill-treatment Yes.....No.....M.....
- 40) You were often cuddled and shown affection Yes.....No.....M.....
- 41) A lot of interest and attention from parents Yes.....No.....M.....

Did any of the following happen to you when you were a teenager (before 20 years)?

- 42) Sexually assaulted Yes.....No.....M.....
- 43) Got involved with a gang Yes.....No.....M.....
- 44) Were you a street kid Yes.....No.....M.....
- 45) Attempted suicide Yes.....No.....M.....
- 46) Abused solvents Yes.....No.....M.....

Preamble: The next set of questions is about culture and the reason these questions are here is because culture can be such an important part of our lives.

47) Ethnicity Maori

Maori/Pakeha

Pakeha

New Zealander

Pacific Islands, Samoa.....Cook Islands.....

Other

Not known

If not Maori go to Q58

(If Maori): Are you involved with your own whanau?

48) Yes..... No.....M.....

49) Hapu/extended family Yes..... No.....M.....

50) Iwi/tribe Yes.....No.....M.....

51) If the answer is yes to any of these, do you attend tangi and hui to do with iwi contacts? Yes.....No.....M.....

52) Are you able to speak and understand Maori? Yes.....No.....M.....

53) Would you feel comfortable with protocol on a marae?
Yes..... No.....M.....

54) Had you been a member of a cultural group before imprisonment?
Yes..... No.....M.....

If yes, was this

Te Kohanga Reo?.....

Runanga?.....

Sports group?.....

Te Rito Arahi?.....

Te Puna Oranga?.....

Other.....

55) Were you able to do some cultural programmes while in prison?

Yes..... No.....M.....

If the answer was yes, what kind of programmes did you do?

Kapa Haka Yes..... No.....

Te Reo..... Yes.....No.....

Arts and crafts Yes..... No.....

Mana Wahine Yes.....No.....

Other.....

56) Do you know about things like taha wairua?

Yes..... No.....M.....

57) Do you know a bit about your iwi history and the effect of colonisation on your iwi?

Yes..... No.....M.....

58) (If from another culture besides Maori), Do you speak your own language?
Yes..... No.....M.....

59) Do you have contact in Christchurch with others from your home country ?
Yes.....No.....M.....

Preamble: Self report offending.

We're now moving on to talking about patterns of offending. I am asking these because I know that what people get caught for is sometimes just a small part of the picture. Remember the information in this interview is confidential.

60) Was your last prison sentence for a violent crime? Yes.....No.....M.....
What was it for?.....

61) Have you had more than one prison sentence in the last 7 years?
Yes.....No.....M.....

62) Have you done any offending since you got out of prison? Yes.....
No.....M.....

63) If yes, were you under 25 years of age when this took place?
Yes.....No.....M.....

64) Did you reoffend in the first week after release? Yes.....No.....M.....

65) Was the reoffending of a violent nature? Yes.....No.....M.....

66) How often would you offend in a month?

Never.....
Sometimes.....
Often.....
Very often.....
All the time.....

If the answer to question 62 was yes:

67) Are you concerned about the consequences for your victims?
Yes..... No.....M.....

68) If yes, does this affect what kind of offending you choose to do?
Yes..... No.....M.....

69) Do you think money worries or financial pressures have influenced whether you have reoffended?
Yes..... No.....M.....

70) If yes, what kinds of offending do you think are preferable?
Violent offending Yes..... No.....M.....
Property offending Yes..... No.....M.....

Drugs Yes..... No.....M.....
 Other (specify) Yes..... No.....M.....

71) Do you think you are more likely to offend over the Christmas period than at other times of the year? Yes..... No.....M.....

72) If yes, why do you think this is?
 (Specify reasons).....

73) Do you ever commit an offence against a person on the spur of the moment and/or in the heat of the moment? Yes.....No.....M.....

74) Have you ever tried to stop someone from planning and/or committing an offence.
 Yes..... No.....M.....

If yes

75) Was this person your
 Partner Yes..... No.....M.....
 brother or sister Yes..... No.....M.....
 friend Yes..... No.....M.....

Preamble: Now we're moving on to talking about your own family right now and the quality of your current relationships. Some people think that relationships are important to look at when you're looking at offending.

Current marital/family relationships

76) Are you in a long term relationship and living with your partner?

Yes.....No.....M.....
 Married Yes.....No.....M.....
 De facto Yes.....No.....M.....
 Single..... Yes..... No.....M.....

77) How would you describe your relationship with your partner?

* Very close, loving Yes.....No.....M.....
 * Close Yes.....No.....M.....
 * Not very close Yes.....No.....M.....
 * Distant Yes.....No.....M.....
 * Hostile, difficult Yes.....No.....M.....

78) Does your partner provide you with adequate emotional support?

Yes.....No.....M.....

79) Does your relationship with your partner involve any of the following:

Never S/times Often V oft All the time

- * Arguments, rows
- * Physical assault
- * Your partner puts you down, constant criticisms
- * You put your partner

down, constant criticisms

* Threats of violence

* You feel controlled by your partner

* You try to control your partner

80) Have you ever been physically assaulted by your partner?

Yes.....No.....M.....

81) If yes, to the extent that;

* You needed medical treatment? Yes..... No.....M.....

* Neighbours or family intervened to stop the violence?

Yes..... No.....M.....

* The police were called Yes..... No.....M.....

* Your partner was convicted Yes..... No.....M.....

* You left home Yes..... No.....M.....

82) Have you ever physically assaulted your partner?

Yes..... No.....M.....

Was it serious enough for your partner to get medical treatment?

Yes..... No.....

83) Have you ever been assaulted by previous partners? Yes.....No.....M.....

Was it serious enough for you to need medical treatment?

Yes.....No.....M.....

Roles in relationships.

84) Do you make most of the important decisions in your family life?

Yes..... No.....M.....

85) Does your partner make most of the decisions about the family?

Yes..... No.....M.....

86) Do you both make decisions together equally?

Yes..... No.....M.....

87) When you have an argument about something are you the one who gives way?

Yes..... No.....M.....

88) If you didn't have your current partner, do you think you would be offending?

Yes.....No.....M.....

89) Do you have dependant children? Yes.....No.....M.....

How many children do you have?

How many of your children are living with you at present?.....

Please list:

Child Age (Yrs mths)

Have you fostered or adopted out any children? Yes..... No.....
Specify

90) Do you find parenting stressful? Yes..... No.....M.....

91) If yes, do you think that not having enough material things for the children may influence you in terms of reoffending? Yes.....No.....M.....

Preamble: I'm going to ask you about your leisure time and how you spend your time.

Leisure time activities.

92) Do you feel you have some leisure time?
Yes..... No.....M.....

93) If yes, what are the kinds of things you do to fill in your spare time?

Yes No M

- * Watch TV
- * Read books
- * Go for a walk
- * play sport

Do you also?

- * gamble
- * drink with friends
- * drink and drug with friends
- * Other (specify)

94) If no, what is your time taken up by?

- * working Yes..... No.....M.....
- * Looking after children Yes..... No.....M.....
- * looking after the family Yes..... No.....M.....
- Other (Specify)

Preamble. The next set of questions looks at what your financial needs are and your housing needs.

95) When you were released from prison did you get your Steps To Freedom money?
Yes..... No.....M.....

96) Did this cover all the expenses in the first two weeks you were outside?
Yes..... No.....M.....

If not, what was the greatest expense for you?
Specify.....

97) Did you need other financial help in the first two weeks?

Yes..... No.....M.....

98) If yes, what other agencies did you see for financial help in those first two weeks?

Income Support.....

PARS.....

Foodbanks.....

Salvation Army.....

PILLARS.....

Probation.....

Other (specify).....

99) Did the help you received mean that you managed?

Yes..... No.....M.....

100) Did you do crime to help your financial situation in those first two weeks?

Yes..... No.....M.....

101) Did some of the Steps money go on drugs or pay backs from prison life in those first few weeks?

Yes..... No.....M.....

102) What is your weekly income right now? Amount.....

103) What is your expenditure per week?

Rent/Board.....

Mortgage.....

Power.....

Telephone.....

Food.....

Transport.....

Medical expenses.....

Clothing.....

School fees.....

Hire purchase.....

Loans.....

Leisure.....

Total.....

104) What are your total debts at the moment?.....

105) How often in the last month have you visited foodbanks ?

Never.....

Sometimes.....

Often.....

Very often

All the time.....

I am now going to ask you about your housing needs.

106) Do you have problems with your current accommodation?

Yes..... No.....M.....

If yes, what are the problems?

* too small	Yes..... No.....
* unhealthy	Yes..... No.....
* unsafe building	Yes..... No.....
* too expensive	Yes..... No.....
* unsafe/bad neighbourhood	Yes..... No.....
other (specify)	

107) What kind of accommodation would meet your needs better?

* bigger size	Yes..... No.....
* cleaner house	Yes..... No.....
* safer house	Yes..... No.....
* cheaper	Yes..... No.....
* better/safer neighbourhood	Yes..... No.....
* A warmer house	Yes..... No.....
Other (Specify)	

Social Support

Preamble: Now I'm going to look at how much social support you have and the relationships you've developed since getting out.

108) When you have problems or difficulties to face, do you have someone whom you can talk things over with?

YesNo.....M.....

109) Who is the person you would most likely talk to?

* Partner	Yes..... No.....M.....
* Parent	Yes..... No.....M.....
* Friend	Yes..... No.....M.....
* Social worker	Yes..... No.....M.....
* Priest etc	Yes..... No.....M.....
* Probation officer	Yes..... No.....M.....
* Prison officer	Yes..... No.....M.....
* Other(specify)	

110) How often would you meet and talk with the following?

Never S/times Often V/ often All the time

- * Parents
- * Family
- * Friends
- * Neighbours
- * Others

111) How often would you get out of the house to visit friends, go shopping, go to the movies, etc?

Never.....S/times.....Often.....Very often.....All the time.....

112) Overall, how would you describe your current social situation?

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| * No support at all | Yes..... No..... |
| * A little lonely and lacking in support | Yes..... No..... |
| * Social life and social supports OK | Yes..... No..... |
| * Good social life and very good social support | Yes..... No..... |
| * Very good social life and social support | Yes..... No..... |

113) Are you currently in contact with any of the following agencies?

Yes..... No.....M.....

- *Community Probation
- *PARS
- *PILLARS
- *New Zealand Income Support Service
- *Methadone clinic
- *Queen Mary Centre
- *A/A or N/A
- *Te Rito Arahi
- *Community Alcohol and Drug Service (CADS)
- *Church social service agency (names below)
- *Bridge programme
- *Women's Centre
- *Nga Wahine Ki Otautahi
- *Te Puna Oranga
- *counselling
- *Any other services

114) Do you see these services on a weekly basis Yes..... No.....

monthly basis Yes..... No.....

other Yes..... No.....

115) If respondent is in contact with any agencies give details.

Agency 1: Name.....

Reason for contact.....

Advice/support/material aid offered.....

Agency 2: Name.....

Reason for contact.....

Advice/support/material aid offered.....

Agency 3: Name.....

Reason for contact.....

Advice/support/material aid offered.....

Agency 4: Name.....

Reason for contact.....

Advice/support/material aid offered.....

Agency 5: Name.....

Reason for contact.....

Advice/support/material aid offered.....

Agency 6: Name.....

Reason for contact.....

Advice/support/material aid offered.....

Agency 7: Name.....

Reason for contact.....

Advice/support/material aid offered.....

Agency 8: Name.....

Reason for contact.....

Advice/support/ material aid offered.....

116) Social service customer survey

Were the agency staff you have dealt with

friendly? Yes..... No.....M.....

helpful? Yes..... No.....M.....

easy to talk to? Yes..... No.....M.....

reliable? Yes..... No.....M.....

available when you needed them? Yes..... No.....M.....

understanding of your culture? Yes..... No.....M.....

understanding of women's issues Yes..... No.....M.....

effective in reducing your offending? Yes..... No.....M.....

117) Were there any difficulties in getting help?

Yes..... No.....M.....

If yes, what were some of the difficulties?

*Lack of transport Yes..... No.....M.....

* hard to make appointment time Yes..... No.....M.....

* Didn't get on with agency worker Yes..... No.....M.....

* Didn't want the kind of help offered Yes..... No.....M.....

118) Did you feel that it was harder to talk to social services staff because you had been in prison?

Yes..... No.....M.....

If yes, how was this harder?

Preamble: These questions talk about prison life to see in what ways prison has helped you to address offending or made it harder for you.

Prison experience

119) While you were in prison were you able to do some programmes?

Yes..... No.....M.....

If yes, what are some of the programmes you took?

School work by correspondence	Yes.....	No.....
University or Polytechnic study	.....	.....
Personal/social development	.....	.....
Maori language	.....	.....
Maori culture	.....	.....
Other cultural programmes	.....	.....
Psychological counselling	.....	.....
ACC counselling	.....	.....
Job skills courses	.....	.....

120) While in prison did you make new friends?

Yes.....No.....M.....

121) If yes, did your friendships help you to stop offending when you got out?

Yes..... No.....M.....

122) Were there any things that you found especially hard about prison?

Separation from loved ones	Yes.....	No.....	M.....
Lack of control	Yes.....	No.....	M.....
Being locked up	Yes.....	No.....	M.....
Frightening experiences	Yes.....	No.....	M.....
Feeling unsafe	Yes.....	No.....	M.....
Tension	Yes.....	No.....	M.....
Violence	Yes.....	No.....	M.....
Boredom	Yes.....	No.....	M.....

123) Do you consider that you did some meaningful work while you were in prison? (as opposed to cleaning the floors with a toothbrush)

Yes..... No.....M.....

124) Did you do any prison industries while in prison?

Yes..... No.....M.....

125) Did you have the opportunity to learn new skills while you were in prison?

Yes..... No.....M.....

126) Did you feel that you could use the complaints process in prison to help sort out problems?

Yes..... No.....M.....

127) Were there inappropriate consequences if you used the complaints process?

Yes..... No.....M.....

Comments

128) If you used the complaints service did you use the prison Inspector or the Ombudsman?.....Why?.....

129) If you used the Inspector, do you feel that the complaint was dealt with effectively?
Yes..... No.....M.....

130) If you used the Ombudsman do you feel your complaint was dealt with effectively?
Yes..... No.....M.....

Are there any comments you would like to make about your time in prison?

Preamble. The next questions look at your history of drug use.

Substance use/abuse.

131) Have you had problems or has anyone told you that you have problems in any of the following areas?

Never S/times Often Very often All the time

Abuse of alcohol
Using illegal drugs
(including marijuana)

If there has been a problem Drugs/Years Alc/years
132) age at which abuse started
How long has it been

133) were either of your parents abusing alcohol
Yes..... No.....M.....

134) Were either of your parents abusing drugs
Yes..... No.....M.....

135) When you are/were drinking, what is/was the effect of alcohol on you?
Yes.....No.....M.....

- *Do you drink to the extent that you can't do things you normally do like sport, hobbies , work, courses
- * Do you drive after you have been drinking over the limit
- * Do you have blackouts e.g. not remembering the previous night
- * Do you have hangovers
- * Do you get into fights or arguments after drinking
- * Has your drinking negatively affected your family relationships
- * Do you continue to drink despite knowing it causes you problems

136) Have you ever used any of the following drugs

	Yes	No	M
* Cannabis			
* Solvents			
* Opiates e.g. MST's			
* Acid (LSD)			
* Stimulants (uppers)			
* Depressants (downers)			
* Prescription drugs (obtained illegally)			
* other			

137) When you were/are using drugs
what is the effect on you

Yes.....No.....M.....

* do you use to the extent
that you can't do things you
normally do e.g. sports,
hobbies etc

* Do you drive after you have
been using drugs
Do you have blackouts e.g.
not remember what you did

* Do you experience
withdrawals

* Have you had several
drug related legal problems

* Do you get into fights or
arguments when
you aren't on them

* Has abuse of drugs
negatively affected your
family relationships

* Do you continue to use
in spite of it causing you
problems

Treatment

Detoxification treatment

138) Have you attended any of the following for Drugs Alcohol
 Times Times

Kennedy
other

Residential treatment

139) Have you had past treatment at: Drugs Alcohol

	Times	Times
Queen Mary Centre		
The Bridge		
Odyssey House		
Claremont		
other		

Non residential treatment programmes/support groups

140) Have you had past treatment at

	Drugs	Alcohol
	Times	Times
* Bridge		
* AA or N/A		
*Te Rito Arahi		
* Rational Recovery		
* CADS		
*Mahu		
*other specify		

141) Sobriety	Drugs	Alcohol
	Yes	No

*In the past have you had time when you were not drinking or using

* If you had clean time or dry time
how long did it last State time.....

Current usage

142) How often would you use these drugs in a month?

Never S/times Often Very often All the time

*Alcohol
*cannabis
*Solvents
*Opiates MST's
*Acid (LSD)
*Stimulants uppers like
pinkies
*Depressants downers
like rollies
*Prescription drugs
obtained illegally
*Other

143) Were you using illegal drugs while in prison? Yes.....No.....M.....

144) If yes, list drugs used and how often

Never S/times Often Very often All the time

*alcohol
*Cannabis
*Solvents
* Opiates
* Acid (LSD)

*Stimulants
 *Depressants
 Prescription drugs
 (obtained illegally)
 *Other

145) Have you had problems obtaining treatment for your substance abuse problem?
 Yes..... No.....M.....

146) If yes, what were the problems?

Yes.....No.....M.....

* On a waiting list
 * no service available in Christchurch for me
 * family needs keep me from treatment
 * blotted copy book with the treatment service
 *Other specify.....

**Preamble: Some people think that ones mental health state affects how we cope.
 The next set of questions are about your mental health needs.**

147) Have you ever received treatment by your GP or any other health professional for a psychiatric or emotional problem?
 Yes..... No.....M.....

If yes, what was the nature of the problem

.....

Treatment (s) and medication given

.....

Duration of problem wks mths yrs

Have you ever been diagnosed with any of the following

Yes.....No.....M.....

* Clinical depression
 * Bi-polar Disorder
 * Personality Disorder
 * Schizophrenia
 * Any other mental illness
 * don't know

148) Have you ever been admitted to a psychiatric hospital/psych unit other than for detox? Yes..... No.....M.....

If yes, Number of admissions.....

Longest admission

wks.....

days.....

Depression

149)Over the last month have you had a period of at least two weeks when you:

felt sad, low or depressed nearly every day and lost interest in most things you had previously enjoyed (even if in prison)?

Yes.....No.....M.....

If yes

How long did you feel like this?

Wks mths

If yes, how many of the following things happened to you?

	Yes	No.....	M.....
* You lost appetite
* You had an increase in appetite
*Lost weight without trying to (as much as a kilo a week for several weeks)
* Had trouble sleeping
* Waking up too early in the morning nearly every day
* Sleeping too much (nearly every night)
*Felt tired,slowed up in your speech or movements most days
* Felt restless, couldn't sit still or paced up and down most days
* Felt worthless, guilty or shameful most days
* Lacked all self confidence
* Had a lot more trouble concentrating
*Thought a lot about death (your own, someone else's or death in general)
*Felt like you wanted to die
* Thought of committing suicide

Personality factors. Preamble: The way we feel about things that come up in life often affects the way we deal with them and this in turn can affect how we cope.

150) Do you think you are:

Never S/times Often V Often All the time

- *A person who does things on the spur of the moment without thinking about the consequences
- * Thinks carefully about doing something
- * A person who has a bad temper
- * A person who is easily led
- * A person who gives way to others
- * A person who likes to lead others
- Other (specify)

151) When you think about all the factors we have discussed so far are there any that have been missed out?

Specify

152) How motivated do you feel to address your offending, would you like to go straight?

Very motivated usually motivated sometimes motivated

rarely motivated not motivated

Goals in life

153) Have you got some goal for the future?

Yes..... No.....M.....

154) If yes, do your goals include;

	Yes	No	M
* a career		
* owning your own home		
* having a family/whanau of your own
* Getting back together with your family/whanau
* getting training		
* Other (specify)		

155) What do you see yourself doing in five years time?

156) On the balance of things we have talked about, what do you think are the most important factors that keep you reoffending?

Rank the factors from 1-10 with 1 being the most important and 10 being least important.

Not having enough money	.....
Not being able to control feelings	.....
Helping friends and/or family out	.....
Meeting your children's needs	.....
Needing money for drugs	.....
Being used to offending, it's a habit	.....
To keep a partner happy	.....	Not
having a job	.....
Feeling lonely and isolated	.....
Wanting things I couldn't otherwise have	.....
Other (Please specify)	.....

157) On the balance of things we have talked about, what do you think are the most important factors that stop you offending?

Rank the factors from 1-10 with 1 being the most important and 10 being the least important.

Having children	.....
Having enough money to live on	.....
Having a non-offending partner	.....
Having non-offending friends	.....
Having interests and hobbies you enjoy	.....
Managing my addiction	.....
Having a supportive non-offending family	.....
Having a job	.....
Having a satisfying social life	.....
Having enough of the things that I want	.....
Other (Please specify)	.....

158) Some of the factors which might have affected offending may have happened over a period of time. Can you place these on a time line? Just put the events by their numbers into the time period when they happened.

TIME LINE OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS WHICH HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO OFFENDING.

0-12.....

12-18.....

18-25.....

25-40.....

Here are some events which might have contributed. Choose the number and put it beside your age.

- 1) Developing a drug/alcohol dependence
- 2) Sexual abuse
- 3) Parents introduce you to crime
- 4) Brothers and sisters introduce you to crime
- 5) You become an angry person
- 6) You ran away from home
- 7) You truanted from school
- 8) You lost the support of your family/whanau
- 9) You began a relationship with an offender
- 10) Your friends were into offending
- 11) You joined a gang
- 12) Loss of an important person
- 13) Other (specify what this was)

TIME LINE OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS WHICH MAY HAVE STOPPED YOU FROM OFFENDING

0-12.....

12-18.....

18-25.....

25-40.....

Here are some events which might have stopped you. Just put the number or numbers beside your age.

- 1) Having someone to support you through the good times and bad
- 2) Having a good role model in your life- someone to look up to.
- 3) Going to A/A or N/A
- 4) Having the support of a social service organisation like PARS
- 5) Having children
- 6) Getting drug treatment
- 7) Getting too old for it
- 8) Having a supportive family/whanau
- 9) Getting in touch with cultural networks/supports
- 10) Having counselling
- 11) Probation officer support
- 12) Having a sponsor
- 13) Becoming religious
- 14) Other (please specify)

159) Some of the factors to contribute to your offending may have happened over a short period of time. The last time that you committed an offence can you remember what influenced you to commit the offence?

The factors might be:

	Yes	No
* Trying to meet family physical needs
* Getting drugs
* Meeting money debts owed to others
* meeting drug debts
* On the spur of the moment crime - because it was there
* Wanting to have things
* Doing crime to please others
* out of control emotions
* Other (Please specify)

Social service Preamble: You can see that some of the questions in this interview have been about social service organisations like PARS that you might have used. The information about these services we hope will identify any gaps in services.

160) Name some of the most important social services you have received after leaving prison

Yes No

* PARS	.....	.....
* PILLARS	.....	.....
* Income Support	.....	.....
* Family/whanau	.....	.....
* Salvation Army	.....	.....
* Foodbanks	.....	.....
* City Mission	.....	.....
* Chaplains	.....	.....
* Church members	.....	.....
* CADS	.....	.....
* Mahu	.....	.....

161) How could the social services that you have been in touch with help you better?

By:

	Yes	No
* Providing more financial help
* Being able to see you more often
* Listening to your needs better
* Being prepared to give you a go
* Being able to communicate with you
* Understanding the situations you face
* Being able to access resources for you
* Not making you feel labelled as an ex-inmate
* Treating you with respect
* Being ready to assist you immediately, not tomorrow etc
* Being available over holiday periods

162) Are there any ways in which you think you could have used social services better?

	Yes	No
* Explaining your needs better
* Not letting angry feelings getting in the way
* Understanding that others use services too and you might not be helped straight away
* Meeting appointment times
* Other (Please specify)

163) Were you given information about support services before you left prison?

Yes..... No.....

164) Which organisations were you referred to?

List

165) Who gave you the information when you were in prison?

Prison officer

Probation officer

Social worker

Chaplain

Kuia

Other

166) Was this information accurate

Yes..... No.....

167) What information would you like to have had before leaving prison?

List answers

168) Did you feel able to make contact with support agencies on your own?

Yes..... No.....

169) Did they make you feel welcome?

Yes..... No.....

170) Did you give up trying to make contact with a support agency<

Yes..... No.....

If yes, what were some of the reasons for giving up?

- * lacked confidence
- * shy
- * felt low about yourself
- * didn't have the energy
- * other (specify)

171) Finally is there anything you think has not been covered during this interview? Is there anything else you would like to say about going straight?

Thank you for participating in this study. I hope it has been interesting for you to reflect on what has happened after release from prison. When I have some feedback for you about the research would you be interested in a hui to find out about this?

Yes..... No..... Other.....

Appendix 4: The interview schedule and questions selected for statistical analysis.

Original 83 variables

Text from interview schedule

Code for Statistica

Demogs

2) Age	AGE
6) Independent Income	INDEPINC
7) Education – NZQA	NZQA

Family Background

16) Pardiv Parents divorced	PARDIV
17) Single parent family	PARSIN
19) Siblings	SIBLINGS
21) Parents in trouble with law	PARLAW
23) Parents in prison	PARPRIS
24) Sibs in trouble with law	SIBLAW
26) Sibs in prison	SIBPRIS
27) Sexual abuse	SEXAB
28) Physical abuse	PHYSAB
29) Seen Sibs abuse	SIBABUSE
30) Witnessed parental abuse	PABUSE
31) Parents drunk or drugged?	PARDD
33) Poverty	POVERTY
34) Foster homes	FOSTER
35) Children's homes	HOMES
37) History of running away from home	RUNAWAY
38) Left alone a lot	ALONE
40) Lack of Affection	AFFECT
41) Interest of parents	INTEREST

Teenage years

42) Sexually assaulted as a teenage	TEENASS
43) Got involved with a gang	TEENGANG
45) Attempted suicide	SUICIDE

Maori Cultural factors

48) whanau	WHANAU
49) hapu	HAPU
50) iwi	IWI
54) Cultural group before prison	CULTURE
56) Cultural programmes in prison	CULTPRIS
57) Other cultures, language	NMLANG
58) Contact with culture	NMHOME

Self report offending

60) Sent violent offence	SENTVIO
61) Criminal history	SENTMUL
62) Re-offended since released from prison	
this question became the definer for the sub-groups of re-offenders and non-offenders	
63) Reoff age	REOFFAGE
64) Reoffend in first week after release?	REOFFTIM
65) Was re-offending violent?	REOFFVIO
66) Frequency of re-offending	FREQOFF

For self-report re-offenders

67) Concern for victims?	VICCONS
69) Financial pressures and offending	OFFMONE
70) Prefers violent offending	PREFVIO
Prefers property offending	PREFPRO
Prefers drug offending	PREFDR
73) Impulse and crime	IMPULSE
74) Have you tried to stop someone planning an offence?	STOPOFF

Quality of current family relationships

76) Long term relationship	LTREL
77) Closeness of relationship	CLOSE
78) Level of partner emotional support	SUPPORT
79) Quality of rel with partner,	
arguments and rows,	RELARG
put downs by partner	RELPUTD
put downs by participant	UPUTD
threats,	THREAT
control by partner	CONTROL
control by participant	UCONTROL
80) Phys assault	PHYSASS
81) Medical treatment	ASSMED
82) Has participant assaulted partner?	UASS
83) Assault by previous partners	PASTASS

Roles in Relationships

84) Does Participant make decisions?	DECISIONS
85) Does partner make decisions?	THEYDEC
88) Relationship and offending?	RELOFF

Dependant children

89) Dependant children?

DEPKIDS

91) Offending to provide for children

KIDSOFF

Leisure time

93) Gamble

GAMBLE

Drink

DRINK

Do drink and drugs

DANDD

Financial needs

95) Steps to Freedom money

STEPS

96) Did this cover all expenses

COVEXP

97) Financial help needed

FINHELP

100) Did you commit crime for financial reasons in first two weeks of release

FINOFF

108) Social support

SOCSUPP

Prison Experience

120) Prison make new friends?

PRISFRI

121) Did friendships help to stop offending?

FRIHELP

Alcohol and drug use

131) Alcohol abuse

ALCAB

Drug abuse

DRAB

143) Use of illegal drugs in prison.

DRPRIS

Psychiatric

147) Psychiatric Problem

PSYCH

Particular disorders: depression, bi-polar, personality disorder, schizophrenia

DEP

BPD

PDS

SCHIZ

APPENDIX 5 List of 47 variables derived from 83 with explanations for collapsing variables.

Where the correlation was significant it was collapsed with the rationale described below.

The guiding principle was the logic of how different aspects of different factors related and common sense in terms of what might be a key factor unnecessarily repeated by another variable or that was very similar to another variable.

REOFFEND	Fairly self evident.
AGE	Fairly self evident.
INDEPINC	Independent Income
NZQA	Presence Absence of qualifications
PARDIV	Parents Divorced
PARSIN	Ever been single parented
SIBLINGS	Siblings
PARLAWPR	Former variables parents in trouble with law and parents in prison collapsed.
SIBLAWPR	Former variables siblings in trouble with law and siblings in prison collapsed.
ABUSE	Questions 27-30, Abuse categories collapsed.
PARDD	Parents Drugged/Drunk
POVERY	Family Poor
PLACED	Questions 34 and 35, the residential home and foster care variable collapsed as correlated highly.
RUNAWAYA	Unchanged
ALONEE	Unchanged
PARINPUT	Questions 40 and 41, parental interest and affection. collapsed highly correlated.
TEENASS	Unchanged
TEENGANG	Unchanged
SUICIDE	Unchanged

Whanau and Language Variables all deleted and these questions dealt with descriptively.

Variable Non-Maori language and contact with people from home country deleted, only 1 case.

SENTVIO	Unchanged
SENMULT	Unchanged
REOFFAGE	Unchanged
REOFFTIM	Unchanged
REOFFVIO	Unchanged
FREQOFF	Unchanged
VICCONS	Unchanged
OFFMONEY	Unchanged
PREFVIO	Unchanged
PREFPRO	Unchanged
PREFDR	Unchanged
IMPULSE	Unchanged
STOPOFF	Unchanged
LTREL	Unchanged
POSREL	Question 77 and 78, Close and support variables collapsed to yield positive relationship variable.
NEGRELA	Question 79, All of the factors, arguments, physical, putdowns, threats and controls collapsed into this variable.

Also the assault variable (Q. 80,82,83) all reversed scored and collapsed into this as well.

A few variables deleted as not enough for analysis, assault needing medical attention, decision making (Q. 81,84, 85).

The decision variables were poorly reported.

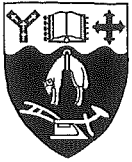
RELOFF	Unchanged
DEPKIDS	Unchanged
KIDSOFF	Unchanged
NEGPAST	Q. 93, gamble, drink and drugs, no real relationship but collapsed to 'negative pastimes'.
Steps deleted as only one person did not get it, therefore no variance	
COVEXP	Unchanged
FINHELP	Unchanged
FINOFF	Unchanged
FRIENDS	Two questions asking about Social support and prison friends collapsed. 0=Has Friends/Social Support as correlated.
FRIHELP	Same
SUBSTANC	alcohol and drug abuse collapsed to substance abuse
DRPRIS	Same
PSYCH	All variables relating to psychiatric categories collapsed.

Women's reoffending after release from prison. What helps women to go straight and what makes this difficult?

Interview guide

- *Age, employment status, highest educational attainment, income level.
- *Physical health/ any disability
- *Changes of address in last six months, where living now.
- *Family background.
- *Ethnicity/cultural status.
- *Criminal offence history.
- *Alcohol and drug usage.
- *Attitudes, beliefs and values.
- *Marital/ Family relationships.
- *Parenting status, dependant children.
- *Companions.
- *Role in relationships.
- *Emotional stability.
- *Mental health status.
- *Sexual and/or physical abuse.
- *Health.
- *Financial status/management; Current level of debt. The Steps to Freedom grant, what costs it covered. Other material assistance required, furniture, food, clothing. How many visits to foodbanks in last four weeks?
- *Accommodation needs.
- *Social service agencies currently engaged with.
- *Motivation to address offending
- *Life goals.
- *A discussion about the effects of imprisonment, contacts, criminal offending knowledge, trauma.
- * A discussion about social service agency involved with. What kind of assistance receiving. How useful it is and how appropriate.
- *An exploration of what factors appear to reinforce and maintain offending.
- *An exploration of what factors protect or stop and/or control offending by reflecting on the combination of factors.
- *Reflection on what the experts consider are important factors and what the client considers are important.

APPENDIX 6b: Letter to participants



University of Canterbury Private Bag 4800
Christchurch New Zealand
Telephone: 03-366 7001
Fax: 03-364 2999

Dear

It's been suggested that you might be interested in helping with the research that I am doing about what helps women to keep straight when they leave prison and what makes women reoffend.

Your input would be valuable and I am keen to speak with you about the research. Because it's important in research for people to let the researcher know (that's me) if they would like to participate, please contact me on 3667 001 extension 8405 or you can write to me in the stamped, addressed envelope with this letter.

I am sending some information about the research to you with this letter so you know a bit more about what it's about.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards



University of Canterbury Private Bag 4800
Christchurch New Zealand
Telephone: 03-366 7001
Fax: 03-364 2999

Dear Client,

Your Probation Officer/case worker has talked with you about the research project I would like to undertake over the next three months. You will have an information sheet given to you about the research. In order for me to make contact with you and to answer any questions you may have about the research, your Probation Officer needs your consent to give me your contact telephone number or address. If you would like to be contacted please sign the form below and I will be in touch with you in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Annabel Taylor

Contact Consent Form

I..... allow my Probation Officer to give my telephone number or address to Annabel Taylor for the purpose of talking about her research project.

Signed..... Date.....

University of Canterbury
Department of Social Work

Women's reoffending after release from prison. What helps women to go straight and what makes this difficult?

You have been invited to take part in a research project about what makes women reoffend after prison and what helps them to go straight. The purpose of this research is to find out more about what difficulties there are for women after release from prison once they are in the community. It is hoped that by increasing our knowledge about this in New Zealand, better services and networks can be established to meet the needs of released women.

I am interested in talking with you about this project so that your experience and knowledge may help other women faced with similar situations. I would like to meet you some time between October - December 1998. I anticipate interviews will take up to two hours, however this may vary from person to person.

My name is Anriabel Taylor, and I have been employed as a social worker in Christchurch Women's Prison from 1989 to 1997. This year I am lecturing and studying in the Social Work Department at the University of Canterbury. I have a long time interest in supporting prisoners in making changes both inside and outside prison.

I am aware of the concerns you may have about confidentiality and safety and for this reason would like to talk to you about any concerns you may have before the interviews take place. Your identity will not be revealed at any stage of the research. Records of your name and contact information will be stored separately from the information that you provide me and once you choose an assumed name for the purposes of this research your real names will be deleted from my file. I hope that the interview will take about an hour and a half.

I am wanting, with your permission, to talk to your Probation Officer/ fieldworker/social worker/ caseworker about what they think about offending needs and how much of these can be met by their agency. If you no longer have any of the above people working with you, I would like to be able to talk to someone you name who has been very helpful to you. Also, it would be helpful

for me to have access to your Probation file so that I can get a better understanding of your own history.

386

I understand that some of the questions I may wish to ask may be sensitive for you and I will respect your needs. You have the right to decline to answer or to withdraw from the interview at any time. If there is information you don't wish to include in the study, it will be excluded. I have attached an interview guide for you see what kind of questions I will ask. The interviews will include questions that either Probation and/or prison staff have already asked you but there will some new questions as well.

Some of the questions cover your cultural background and Tania Mataki from Te Puna Oranga has offered to accompany me for the interview if you would like her to be present. Please tell me if this is what you would like.

This research project is being supervised by Dr Dugald McDonald at the Department of Social Work of the University of Canterbury and you may contact my supervisors through the Department at any time if the need arose. This project has gained the approval of the University of Canterbury Ethics Committee. If you have any queries, you can contact me at the university on 3667 001 between 8-5pm weekdays or you can write to:

Annabel Taylor
c/o Department of Social Work
University of Canterbury
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch

Women's Reoffending After Release from Prison
What helps Women to go Straight and What
Makes This Difficult?

Participant Consent Form

I, (name).....have been fully informed about the aims and objectives of the above named study and have understood the written information provided. My confidentiality and safety concerns have been discussed and accounted for. It is on this basis, with the understanding that my personal details will remain anonymous, that I agree to take part in this study and consent to the publication of succeeding written reports. I am aware that I can withdraw my involvement at any given stage and have the information provided by me returned upon request. I know that if I am not happy about any part of the research I may contact Dr Dugald McDonald at the Department of Social Work, University of Canterbury.

Signed.....

Date.....

CONSENT TO ACCESS COMMUNITY PROBATION INFORMATION.

I..... consent to Annabel Taylor accessing
information about me that is held by Community Probation of the
Department of Corrections.

Signed.....

Date.....